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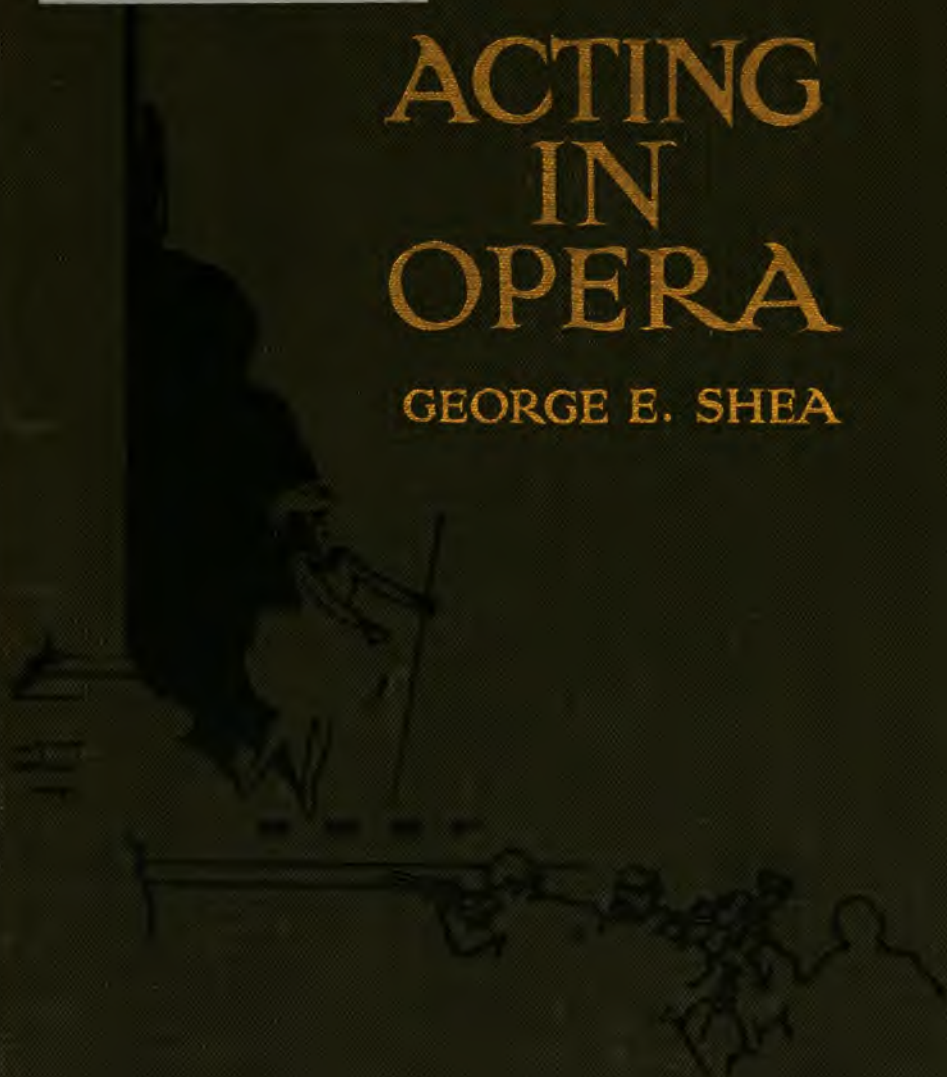
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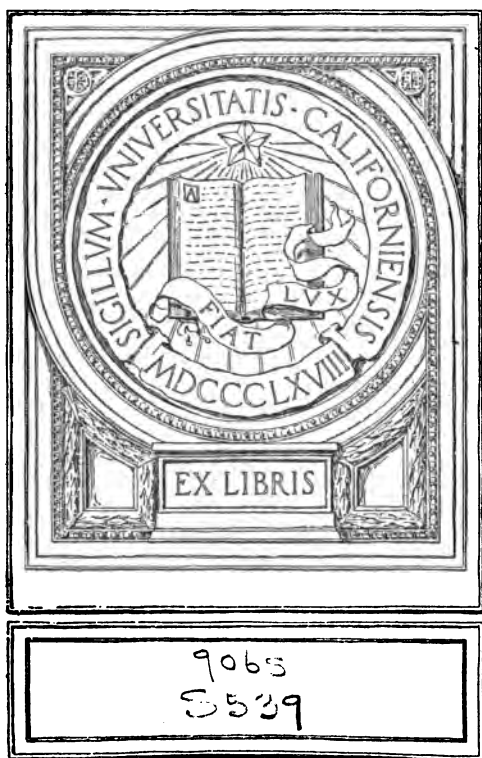


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# ACTING IN OPERA

GEORGE E. SHEA









## **ACTING IN OPERA**



# **ACTING IN OPERA**

## **ITS A-B-C**

**WITH  
DESCRIPTIVE EXAMPLES, PRACTICAL HINTS  
AND NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS**

*By*  
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**LONDON . NEW YORK . BOSTON**



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TO VISIT  
AMPHIBOLIO

The author of this work was the first American man to sing in opera in France. His experiences—as leading Baritone for three years at the Royal French Opera, The Hague; with Lamoureux in the first performances of “Tristan” in Paris; in the Municipal Opera Companies of Toulouse, Nancy and St.-Étienne; in numerous operatic performances in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Liège, etc., etc., and also as a teacher subsequently—are embodied herein.



## INTRODUCTION

Most vocal students who expect to become opera singers—many of them already well advanced musically and vocally—are ignorant of the principles and of the practice of acting; yet the combination of glance, attitude, gesture, walk and bearing, which forms an easy and effective “stage presence,” is essential to the equipment of an operatic artist. Familiarity with these elements, through their frequent practice, should be the student’s concern for two years before the début in opera—just as the habit of a dignified and reposeful attitude while singing should be acquired from the very first lessons in voice-training.

The manner of the employment of gestures and attitudes is different in Opera from what it is in Comedy or the Drama. In these latter, the demeanor and actions of the personages approach those of real life. On the other hand, Tragedy in verse requires a dramatic use of the plastic art similar in kind, but inferior in degree, to that needed in Opera; for in Opera the flow of the words is so retarded or hampered by the music, that gestures and attitudes must be inflated and given a duration which would amount to exaggeration even in tragedy. To be sure, there are in Opera, and especially in modern operas, passages of recitative, or of silent mimicry commented by

the orchestra, which approximate the Drama in rapidity of enunciation or of action. However, this rule of rapidity in the Drama is the exception in those operas forming the repertory of to-day, so that we may assume operatic acting to be in a class by itself, requiring special study.

Now, the human body's capacity for varied expression is extensive, but this variety is formed through differing combinations of a relatively few primary positions and movements of the trunk, head, and limbs. Some of these I wish to dissect and explain, subsequently indicating their use in connection with the poetical text and the musical phrase of opera, after which a few practical suggestions for stage deportment will follow. The beginner, once in possession of these fundamentals, will find them applicable to parts of widely different character. This modest work does not pretend to catalogue all, or even a majority, of the phases of plastic art applicable to opera. It but aims to disclose to the neophyte the possibilities of this art and the principles which are its foundation.

## DEFINITIONS OF TERMS EMPLOYED

Audience  
Public  
Spectator  
Auditorium  
Hall

} = Same thing.

### Axes:

FRONT AXIS	= Imaginary horizontal straight line through centre of body from front to back.
SIDE AXIS	= Imaginary straight horizontal line run through the shoulders.
DIAGONAL	= Imaginary straight horizontal line through body, midway between front and side axes.

**Crook'd (or Hooked) Fingers** = Fingers flexed at hand (metacarpal) joint, or at their first joint beyond hand.

**Cupped Hand** = Centre of palm somewhat hollowed.

**Deferred Completion** (See Chapter IV, first page).

### Elevation:

$\frac{1}{8}$ ELEVATION	= Arm or forearm slightly raised from hanging position. It forms an angle of 25° with perpendicular to floor.
$\frac{1}{4}$ ELEVATION	= Arm or forearm at angle of 45° with perpendicular to floor.
$\frac{3}{8}$ ELEVATION	= Arm or forearm slightly below horizontal.
HORIZONTAL	= Arm or forearm parallel to floor.
$\frac{3}{8}$ ELEVATION	= Arm or forearm slightly above horizontal.
$\frac{1}{2}$ ELEVATION	= Arm or forearm toward sky at angle of 45° with vertical.
$\frac{3}{4}$ ELEVATION	= Arm almost vertical.

**"Fix"** = Maintain the position of body or limb until next move described in text.

<b>"Front"</b>	=	Turned toward public; associate usual meaning; in front axis or parallel to front axis.
<b>Index</b>	=	Forefinger.
<b>Interlocutor</b>	=	Other party to dialogue.
<b>Medius</b>	=	Middle finger.
<b>Overlapping Fingers</b>	=	{ Little finger overlapping inside of third finger; third finger, that of medius; and medius, that of index. (See illustration D <sup>1</sup> facing page 34).
<b>Protagonist</b>	=	Principal actor at any given moment. Artiste doing the singing at any given moment.
<b>Right and Left of Stage:</b>		
RIGHT RIGHT CENTRE ETC.	}	(Unless otherwise specified): refers to right of stage as seen by the audience.
LEFT LEFT CENTRE ETC.	}	(Unless otherwise specified): refers to left of stage as seen by the audience.

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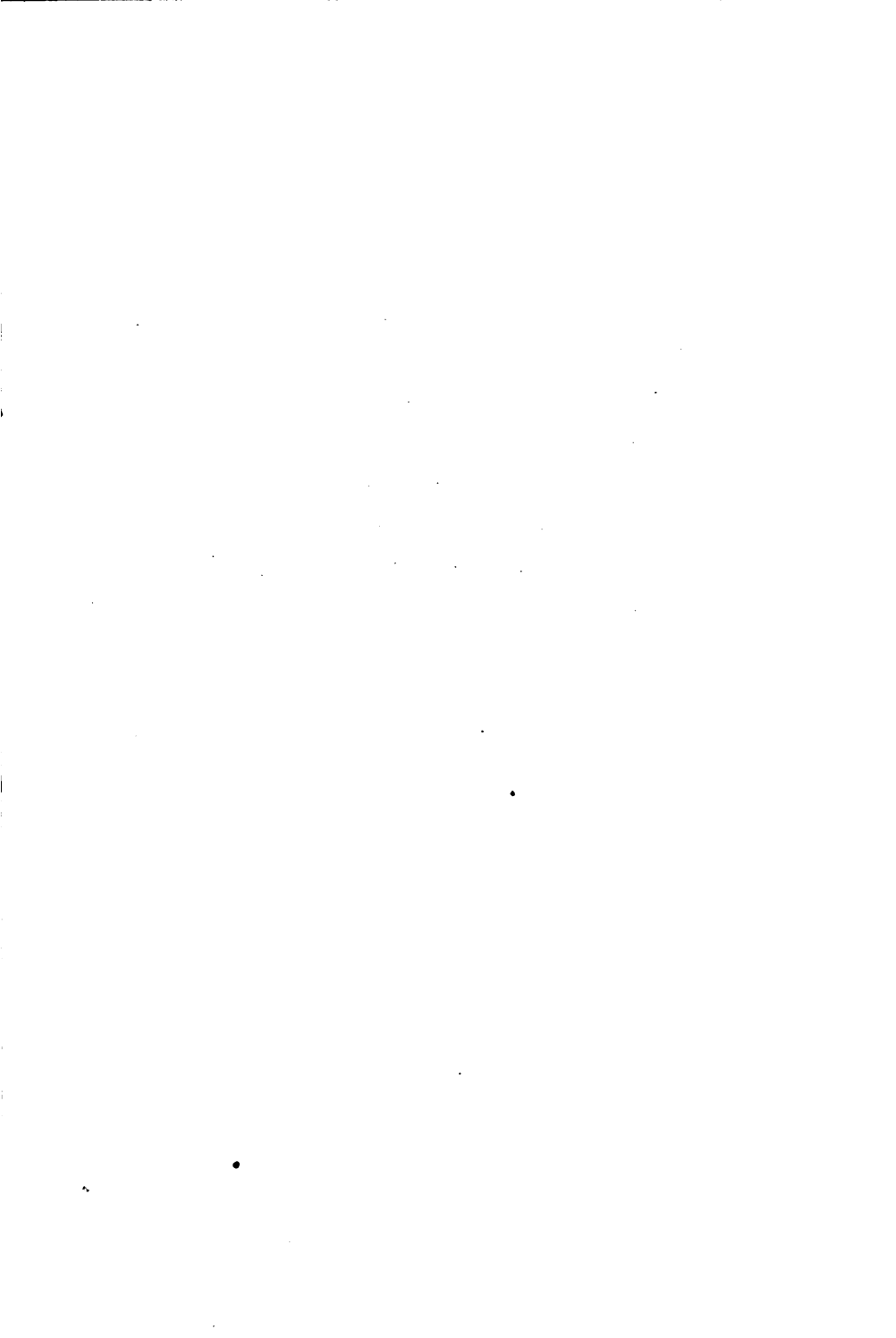
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## **ACTING IN OPERA**



# ACTING IN OPERA

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## CHAPTER I

### HOW TO WALK

#### PRACTICE IN ELEMENTARY STAGE MANŒUVRES.

How to walk is the first thing to learn in preparation for the stage. Slouching, rocking the body, a wide swing of the arms, are taboo except in comic or abnormal personages. A reposeful bearing on the stage—not woodenness—is a great asset for the actor. Only in the portrayal of clodhoppers, such as Masetto in *Don Juan*, does one roll the shoulders and swing the arms; and a Rigoletto's deformity limp is rather an exception. Inasmuch as the arms are swung very little in the ordinary stage walk, a slight increase in their swing will suffice to give you a jaunty bearing, and with a little more swing in arm and spring in step you will become positively frolicsome. Alike in the dignified or gallant or businesslike walk, and in that of the princess or the grisette, *the centre of balance is at the centre of the back, about three inches below the waist-line.* This, together with a slight, free lifting of the thighs—rapid or leisurely, as befits the case—constitutes the secret of the normal stage walk. When going up the stage, remember that the floor rises toward the back

and that in order not to stumble you must lift the feet, from the thighs, somewhat higher. Practice walking around or across your room with head erect, arms hanging loosely at the sides and swinging very little. Start with a few strides. From a standing position with the feet near together, take three leisurely steps, starting with the right leg. The third step is with the right leg, and as your weight goes onto it and you halt, your left leg is brought easily up beside it. Now, to start off again with the left leg will be easy, but in order to start with the right leg you must first shift your weight from it to the left leg. Do so, and start the next three steps with your right foot, keeping your balance well. Then start two such successive groups of three steps with the left leg. This may seem childish, but such practice, *at different speeds*, will be time well spent.

#### PIVOTING.

(1) Start with the right foot, and at the third step, as soon as the weight has come onto and passed over the right heel, stop and simultaneously pivot to your left—on the balls of both feet, the heels just clearing the floor—so as to face back toward your starting-point. Don't change the position of the feet, except to draw the left foot comfortably nearer the right one. Your weight is now on the right foot. Turn your head to the right and pivot back to the right, facing in the original direction. Your weight has been transferred to the left foot. Once more turn your head to the left and pivot to the left. You are now facing your starting-

point again and your weight is on the right foot; this permits you to start with the left leg upon the next three steps back to the starting-point. At the third step (made by left leg) you pivot to the right through a half-circle, then to the left, once more to the right, and start off anew. Practice this frequently.

(2) Another manner of pivoting, useful in rapid movements, is as follows: Take three steps, the first one with the right leg. On the second step, after your weight has come onto and passed over the left heel, pivot to the left on the ball of the left foot and at the same time *take the third step* (with the right foot) *backward*, so that as you come to a stop, with the weight on the right foot, you already face back toward your starting-point. Practice this with either foot.

This command of pivoting is most useful. It enables you, from a stationary position, to start walking in *any new direction*, and to do so gracefully.

Suppose you are down-stage, at the (your) right, facing the audience. Stage convention requires that from this point you turn to the left in facing about. This is because your face should continue to be seen by the audience as long as possible. You desire so to wheel about in order to go up-stage. To accomplish this comfortably, there are three ways.

a. The first, and most authoritative way: Your weight being on the left leg (*and you've prepared this in advance*), take one step forward with the right foot, and as your right boot-toe touches the floor you pivot thereon toward the left, so that when the weight of your advancing body has come



onto your right heel you are facing diagonally up the stage.

b. The second way: Your weight being on the right (forward) foot, you can pivot to the left on its ball, rapidly or slowly, as required. In this case the left foot must be well behind (not to the side of) the right foot.

c. The third: The weight is on the right foot; a rapid step backward by the left foot, and your weight passes onto it; you pivot on it, sliding your right foot comfortably nearer to it. This is the most difficult to execute, but is useful in moments of extreme surprise or physical apprehension.

So, practice pivoting until *thoroughly familiar* with it, and remember, in connection with this, that all attitudes and movements on the stage are prepared in advance and that the means of doing anything gracefully lies in the previous disposal of your body's weight, depending thus on the relative positions of your feet, and—in a lesser degree—of your arms. It is not when the moment has come to turn, advance, and salute, that you must jerk into readiness as would a commuter who, when halfway to the station, finds that he has forgotten the key to his office desk.

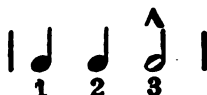
#### THE WALK COMBINED WITH SIMPLE GESTURES.

Now add a gesture as you take the last step in these preceding groups of three steps.

A<sup>1</sup>. With the left arm hanging at the side and the tips of the right hand's deployed and slightly

crook'd fingers resting on the left breast, take three steps, starting with the right foot, and with the third step throw your right open hand forward and up to a  $\frac{7}{8}$  elevation in a gesture which may mean "toward yonder stars." The gesture (with the palm turned somewhat upward) is completed (see "Gestures of Deferred Completion," page 26) just as the body comes to immobility, the weight on the right (forward) foot, and the left leg tense on its toes.

A<sup>2</sup>. Start again, with the left foot this time; take three steps and make the gesture with the right hand again. The rhythm of these steps is



and the gesture (^) falls on the third beat.

A<sup>3</sup>-A<sup>4</sup>. Now take the steps in the same two ways, making the gestures with the left hand.

B<sup>1</sup>. Same steps and gesture, but this time, just after you take the third step and make the gesture, the rear foot is brought up beside the forward foot, the weight remaining on forward foot. The rhythm of the steps is



^ marking the concordance of step and gesture. You start once with the right foot, and

B<sup>2</sup>. once with the left foot.

B<sup>3</sup>. Then start with the left foot and make gesture with left hand;

**B<sup>4</sup>.** and start with right foot and make gesture with left hand. Rhythm for **B<sup>3</sup>** and **B<sup>4</sup>**:



**AA<sup>1</sup>, AA<sup>2</sup>.** Place both hands on breast as above (crossing them at wrists) and do the **A<sup>1</sup>** and **A<sup>2</sup>** steps, making the gesture with both arms at the third beat. Rhythm:



**BB<sup>1</sup>, BB<sup>2</sup>.** Then do **B<sup>1</sup>** and **B<sup>2</sup>**, making the gesture with both arms on the third step. Rhythm:



The writer has heard it said that when soldiers are tired with a long march, if their officers march them backward for five minutes it rests them greatly. Let us walk backward for a moment.

<sup>1</sup>♩. Start with left foot, arms hanging, and at third step backward raise the right hand in refusal: arm straight out, horizontally, in front; open palm turned forward vertically; fingers vertical, near together; thumb out to left. The right foot remains in front of the left foot; weight on left foot. Left leg bent at knee; right leg straight.

<sup>2</sup>♩. Gesture with same hand; right foot takes first and last steps.

<sup>3</sup>♩. Gesture with left hand; start with left foot.

<sup>1</sup>C. Gesture with left hand; start with right foot. Rhythm in 4, 3, 2, 1C:



<sup>1</sup>E, <sup>2</sup>E. Start the steps backward with the right foot (<sup>1</sup>E), and then with the left foot (<sup>2</sup>E), making the gesture each time with the right hand, but immediately after the third step and the simultaneous gesture, bring the forward foot back beside the rear foot (on which the weight rests). Rhythm in



<sup>2</sup>E. Start these steps backward with right foot and then

<sup>1</sup>E. with left foot; gesture with other—left—hand and arm.

These steps may next be combined with the same gesture made with both hands simultaneously. Practice these same steps backward and forward with other simple gestures, such as:

<sup>1</sup>E. Right arm hanging at side. Left hand on breast, as above; start backward with left foot. Upon third step, sweep left hand to left into side axis, arm straight and horizontal, left hand open, almost flat, almost vertical; fingers together and slightly overlapping; thumb up, slightly beyond vertical. This gesture may be interpreted as "Here is the man." The step rhythm is:



**²F.** Start backward with the right foot, and make same gesture with right arm. The rhythm



may also be used with this gesture.

**F¹.** Make same manœuvre forward; same step rhythms. Start with right foot, left hand on breast, and make gesture with left hand and arm.

**F³** Start with left foot and make gesture with right arm: both rhythms. Same import: "Here is the man."

**NOTE.** **F²** and **F⁴** are to be avoided; ill-balanced and ungraceful.

**¹X.** Same step rhythms. Start backward with right foot; left hand on breast, as above. At third step, the left hand is swept down to  $\frac{1}{8}$  elevation. It points to the ground before the left foot. It is open, flat; the thumb juts out to left; the fingers are together and slightly overlapping (little finger over annular, etc.). The arm is straight. Import: "Here, at my feet, he fell."

**²X.** Right hand on breast; start backward with left foot; gesture with right hand.

Same manœuvres forward; both rhythms:

**K¹.** Start right foot, and gesture with left hand.

**K².** Start left foot, and gesture with left hand.

**K³.** Start right foot, and gesture with right hand.

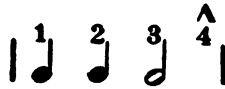
**K⁴.** Start left foot, and gesture with right hand.

All these exercises can be further extended by increasing the number of the steps preparatory to the one upon which the gesture falls.

Furthermore, the gestures may be made *after* the steps, when the feet have assumed their final position. In which case the rhythm



becomes



and the rhythm



becomes



## CHAPTER II

### GESTURE

SOBRIETY AND ECONOMY OF GESTURE: AN  
EXAMPLE. REMARKS; DIFFERING  
DEGREES OF GESTURE IN DIF-  
FERENT CLASSES OF OPERA.

*In opera, the gesture must fall (be completed) on one of the strong beats of the musical measure and on some culminating point of the musical phrase, either vocal, orchestral, or choral. Very important.*

The gesture is a good servant but a bad master. Beware of its too frequent use. Decide in advance what gestures you will make in a given place, and stick to them. Do not, through nervousness or the fear of a difficult bit of vocalization, exceed these self-imposed limits or indulge at hazard in snap gestures. You risk comparison with a windmill. Above all, do not count, for your acting, upon the moment's inspiration: "Ah, when I'm in front of the public and let myself go, I shall act it all right, no fear!"—Fatal error! Attitude, look, gesture, gait, number of steps, also one's varying positions on the stage in relation to one's fellow artists, must be decided upon and learned by heart in advance. And in building up beforehand this dramatic characterization, you must create a progression of effect therein—gradation from a quiet beginning to a powerful ending—reserving the most telling gesture, the most effective attitude, for the culmination

---

of each aria, and, moreover, graduating the whole evening's work toward the climax of your part.

To return to the individual gestures: Be sparing of them. Take up a position and exploit it. Upon one attitude of body and feet, you may perfectly well hang three to six different gestures, accompanied by variations in the pose of the head and the direction of the eyes. And each of these sub-attitudes may be maintained for one or several measures of the music, so that a comparatively few attitudes and gestures will suffice for the "decoration" of an entire air, and you will not have fatigued the audience by kaleidoscopic bewilderment nor yet have exasperated it by your woodenness. An example of this will be found in the following "dressing" of a supposititious aria:

Let us presume you have delivered your recitative while standing a little way up the stage on the right (your right), and that during the ensuing prelude you have moved meditatively down-stage. One or two beats before your first note, you halt at a spot just within the proscenium arch and slightly to the right of the prompter's box (which is usually on the stage just within the footlights, on the edge of the orchestra's pit). Here you sing the aria's first section, which is perhaps an *Andante*. Just as you are about to attack it, you advance your

- A. right foot slightly, throwing your weight thereon, and at the same time gently raising and extending the right hand, palm downward and fingers a bit separated, on a level with the chest. This position may suffice for a whole musical phrase, or more, according to the sentiments expressed.



- Do you wish to vary it slightly? Simply turn
- B.** the right palm upward and move the arm somewhat to the right. (Thus, in Lohengrin's Grail Recital, his initial attitude need not be varied during the first eight measures; for the following seven measures an extremely slight variation of the attitude suffices; a further slight one for the ensuing three measures, and only at the twentieth measure: "es heisst der Graal," is an accentuated gesture employed, i. e., the index finger on high.)
- C.** Subsequently, the right hand is further raised and the left hand comes into action, being lifted sideways, a little away from the left thigh.
- D.** Throughout this Andante the right arm dominates; its uplifted index finger may now, perhaps, mark an important statement; then brusquely, in a contrasting sentiment of the text, the right
- E.** arm is thrust forward at the shoulder's height, the hand—palm downward and the fingers separated—extended toward the audience. The left arm and hand imitate the right at a somewhat lower level. This attitude will serve for three or four measures of the song. After which,
- F.** perchance, the text will allow you to open the arms in a gesture of appeal, and you will terminate the first part of the aria by a fairly lofty gesture of the right arm, the left arm remaining fairly low, its hand, however, having the same expressiveness as the right hand.
- Several measures of interlude will probably
- H.** follow. Utilize them by slowly and gracefully regaining an attitude of repose (Class I; see Chapter on "Attitudes"), and, as the arms

- lapse, vary the picture by taking a few steps  
**J.** to the left of the prompter's box. (See page 6, b.)

Here you may deliver the song's central section, during which let the left hand dominate in the gesticulation. By this simple alternation, some of the gestures (**A, B, C, D, G**, for instance) of the first part may, if appropriate to the sense, be again employed, thus reversed, without giving an impression of repetition and paucity. But if this central section be an *Allegro* requiring vehement treatment, you can extend and multiply your strides—"burning the boards"—and you must draw from a stock of decisive, or expostulatory, or vehement, or passionate gestures, some of which will be described further on in this little work.

Should a pause then ensue, preceding the aria's concluding section, take advantage of it to regain, in a few rapid steps, your starting-point to the right of the prompter's box; there to terminate. The right hand is anew the dominating one, but the left follows it closely.

- K.** You sing of tears, and the right-hand fingers are brought to gracefully touch the right cheek-bone.  
**L.** The hands are once more extended forward,  
**M.** palms down; then clasped in supplication (the body in a *Class II* attitude); the hands, still  
**N.** clasped, sink before the thighs; they are separated  
**O.** wide, and at shoulder level, in despairing entreaty, palms up;  
**R.** then the forearms are crossed over the breast, the fingers being crook'd, and from there  
**S.** they are swung out and up to a lofty two-arm gesture which marks the aria's termination by an accentuated attitude, forming a picture more

striking than any previous one. (Maintain this last attitude as long as you hold the final note, then melt it into the attitude required by the ensuing dramatic situation.)

This outline shows that a relatively few gestures (in this instance fourteen—five employed twice) suffice for an aria.

In practice, of course, the gestures have their source and their reason in the sentiments of the poetic text. Stock gestures, if they do not spring from and illuminate the text, can never be convincing, however skillfully employed.

#### REMARKS.

A would-be artiste who can execute acceptably two isolated gestures or who can strike effectively two unrelated attitudes, may nevertheless be incapable of passing artistically from one of these gestures or attitudes to the other. If the first attitude does not lend itself readily to the change to the second one, an intermediate attitude—a bridge—must be found, facilitating the transition and rendering it logical. (See Chapters on "The Feet," page 48, and on "Attitudes," Class II, page 39.) The cue to this interpolated position may usually be found in the text. (See illustration facing this page.)

This merging of one attitude into another may be done at all speeds, according to the exigencies of text and music. The slow merging is more difficult, because it requires a better balance, more elegance, more complete muscular control, and perfect accordance with the musical rhythm.

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A<sup>3</sup>



The brusque alteration of gesture must be reserved to mark agitation, sudden resolve or danger, revelation, discovery, the sight of a much hated or loved person. And, even then, such an immediate and radical change of sentiment may be portrayed without displacing the feet and without violent displacement of the body. For example, we are to (our) right of prompter's box and have finished the preceding supposititious aria with a Class I or a Class II attitude: head erect, arms widely extended, the hands—palms upward and inward—higher than the head; then a menace comes from the left (as it probably would actually in an opera, because that is *why* we would have finished the aria on our Right Hand Side of the stage, i. e., Stage Manager's Orders); at once, the body stiffens, the head and glance turn to the left, the arms rotate downward, the fists clenching simultaneously and jerking over to the right—the left arm swept across and pressed against the right breast; the right arm extended to the right, but on a level with the shoulder and as rigid as an iron bar. The picture has altered radically, yet the feet have not been shifted, nor need the trunk have moved.

Frequently, especially in slow gestures or in lengthy poses, a counterbalancing of the arms produces a happy effect and ensures the equilibrium of the body. Thus, if the right arm is high and to the right, the left arm may be low and to the left; or, if the left arm is high and forward of the side axis (see "Definitions"), the right arm may be lowered and behind the side axis. (See illustration, page 16.)

A sudden reversal of the respective positions of the arms is ugly and shocks the eye's sense of

proportion and balance. Suppose that your right arm is lifted and your left depressed; you suddenly drop the right arm and at the same time lift the left: the effect is ridiculous. But with the right arm lifted and the left depressed, if you wish to reverse, you must either lift the left arm as high as the right arm and then lower this right one, or you may first lower the right arm and then lift the left one. Or, the reversal *may* be done *directly*, if done *very slowly*. This last movement will be facilitated and beautified by pivoting slightly on the balls of the feet toward the side of the rising arm. And, as you turn away from the high arm, *you leave it behind you, where it was* (despite the turn of your body), and then allow it to sink slowly *while the other arm rises*. (See illustration, page 16.)

Any one gesture may be given quadruple variety through varying use of the *hand*; namely, the fist, the fist with index finger disengaged, the open flat hand, the open hand with crook'd fingers.

You may also give various aspects to any one attitude of the body through different positions of the whole arm, forearm, and hand.

Gestures of calm, of grace, of elegance, should be particularly well rounded, moving to completion with never an angle in their curving line.

The gesture must fall on one of the strong beats of the musical measure and on a culminating point of the musical phrase, either vocal or orchestral. *Very important.*



This last precept is so true that where, in declamatory passages, there is a rest on the strong beat, the gesture or stride often falls *on the rest* instead of on one of the ensuing sung words. (See "Opera Examples," pages 65, 66, 72 and 74.)

### GESTURE IN DIFFERENT CLASSES OF OPERA

In the different classes of operatic works one uses the same gestures, but they differ in degree, intensity and scope. Thus:

<p>In Grand Opera and Serious Opéra Comique</p>	{	<p>are portrayed: Great passions, lofty sentiments, deep villainy, heroic epochs, legendary personages, on vast stages.</p>
---	---	---

Therefore the gestures here must be in keeping with the setting: Ample gestures (arms wide; "whole-arm" gestures: See "Classification of Gestures," Chap. III and IV);

Lengthy stride;

Conventional gestures (the fruit of experience and selection) are acceptable and even necessary. (Example: Bravura Gesture, Chapter on "Whole-Arm Gestures," page 27, see illustration.)

<p>In real Opéra Comique and Modern Plot Operas</p>	{	<p>the characters are more like unto every-day people; the works are of smaller proportions, and are suited to smaller stages.</p>
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Therefore the gestures and attitudes used in them copy or approximate real-life gestures (at least those of the Latin races).

Upper arms are nearer body;

Forearm and hand dominate in gesticulation;

Medium length of stride.

In most Operettas and Musical Comedies { which are works of restricted dimensions and restricted inspiration, meant to amuse and finishing happily,

real-life gestures, even more circumscribed, are used:

Arms rarely raised higher than level of shoulders;

Knowledge of dancing necessary.

## CHAPTER III

### CLASSIFICATION OF GESTURES

Gestures of the arm and hand may be classified thus:

- |              |                            |             |
|--------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Whole-arm | { A. Rigid.<br>B. Rounded. | 2. Forearm. |
|--------------|----------------------------|-------------|

#### 1 (A). WHOLE-ARM: RIGID

The Rigid-Arm gestures are of rugged and primeval force. *In them, the arm and hand have been rotated as required before the arm is lifted, all of a piece, from the hanging position, or before it is swung from the position in which the last preceding gesture had left it. It is thus swept, from the shoulder, up or down, or horizontally back or forward, or across the chest; and all this may be done either with the fist clenched, the hand open, or the index finger extended and the other fingers clenched; or the rigid arm may be flung horizontally in front of the shoulder with the flat hand turned up at right angles to the forearm, the fingers being together and the palm outward.*

N. B. All gestures should be made with equal facility with either arm and hand. In order to aid in the acquirement of this, those of the ensuing gestures made with only one arm are described as being made with the *left arm*.

I give some of these rigid-arm gestures, together with their significance.

1. "*Silence! Stand back!*" (Class I, II, III.)

Arm lifted to horizontal, halfway between front and side axes; rigid, with open flat hand, palm turned backward, thumb below, and protruding; the arm is swept horizontally to left and stopped ("fix") to rear of side axis of body. (The side axis is the imaginary straight line run sidewise through the shoulders. The front axis is run through the body from back to front at right angles with the side axis.)

Head erect; stern regard turned on person commanded (or it may be fixed on space in front of gesticulator).

2. "*Out of the way!*" (Class I, II, III.)

Arm rigid, horizontal (with flat open hand, fingers together, thumb up, swept to right across body and then "fix").

Head erect; stern regard to right, and then immediately back to the left to person commanded. This gesture embodies a brutal command of expulsion, of passage *to the right*, in front of the gesticulator.

3. "*Oh, don't speak of that!*" (Class I, II.)

Arm and hand same as in "stand back," but directed to the floor at an angle of 45 degrees (what I call a " $\frac{1}{4}$  elevation") to the left of and behind side axis; thumb against index joint. The head is slightly bent forward, and the eyelids droop.

4. "*Halt and listen!*" (Class I, II, III.)

Arm lifted rigidly to position, straight out in front of body, a little above horizontal;





**B**  
**Rigid-Arm Gesture (Class II Attitude)**

hand flat (fingers and thumb together, palm outward) and bent back toward forearm at nearly a right angle. Head erect; authoritative regard front.

5. "*O ye (afar), give heed!*" (Class I, II.)

Arm and flat hand lifted to form straight line at  $\frac{3}{4}$  elevation (i. e., halfway between horizontal and vertical) in front of body; palm outward (turned front); fingers, and thumb, slightly separated.

Head thrown back; regard front (toward "ye afar").

6. "*I swear it!*" (Class I, II, III.)

Arm as in preceding, but higher, is brought down rigidly and powerfully to the horizontal out in front of body; fingers and thumb together in one plane; palm down.

Head thrown slightly back; eyes front and at level.

7. "*You shall do it!*" (Class II.)

Same movement as in preceding, but with clenched fist (palm downward).

Head back; jaw advanced and clenched: glance stern.

8. "*I will crush him!*" (Class I, II.)

Start as in preceding gesture, but rigid arm and clenched fist (thumb-side up) are shot down and fixed parallel with left leg (or, in Class II, parallel with the right leg, when weight is on it). (See illustration.)

Head back; eyes level or  $\frac{5}{8}$  elevation.

9. "*He shall fall from his lofty position.*" (Class I, II.)

The arm position and sweep-down are same as in preceding; however, the index finger sticks rigidly out from the clenched fist and the elbow is slightly crook'd at the start; but the arm is rigid upon reaching the low position.

10. "*You see to what you have brought us!*" (or)  
"*You miserable creature!*" (Class I, II.)

Rigid arm is lifted and stretched horizontally toward person addressed; hand flat, palm up, thumb separated from fingers and turned outward, fingers together; chin advanced; regard to interlocutor.

11. "*How avoid it? . . . . .*" (Class I, II.)

Same as preceding gesture, but arm (or arms) are "fix" at  $\frac{1}{4}$  elevation or at horizontal (and they may be more or less widely separated). Head erect and somewhat sunk between shoulders; eyes well opened.

12. "*You, beware!*" (Class I, II.)

Rigid arm, same as in No. 11, but horizontal; hand not quite flat; fingers and thumb drawing tensely toward palm; elbow may be slightly crook'd; palm up.

Head and chin advanced; lower teeth bared; eyes glaring.

13. "*Desire for vengeance.*" (Class I, II.)

Same as No. 12, but fingers more drawn toward hollowed palm; arm may be slightly crook'd at elbow.

Head, chin, and teeth, same as in No. 12; eyelids tight around eyes.

14. "*Malediction!*" (Class I, II, III.)

Same as preceding, but with forearm rotated and palm turned down.

Head between shoulders. (*Faust*, Garden Scene, Mephisto: "Sous cette main maudite.")

15. "*Despair!*" (Class I, II, III.)

Arms rigid; hands clasped above head; thus joined, they are swept down rapidly—or slowly—till elbows strike body.

16. "*Despair and powerlessness.*" (Class I, II, III.)

Clenched fists almost above head and bent back toward forearm, palms upward; the rigid arms are brought down slowly, or rapidly, against the sides of the thighs.

The head—at beginning of gesture—is thrown back, with upward glance, and falls forward on breast as arms drop.

N. B.—All these gestures may be executed with "deferred completion," but they lose force thereby. (See definition of "deferred completion", page 26.)

N. B.—Gestures 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 13 and 14 may also be executed with both arms simultaneously.



## CHAPTER IV

### CLASSIFICATION OF GESTURES (Continued)

#### 1 (B). WHOLE-ARM: ROUNDED.

These may also be defined as gestures of "deferred completion," that is to say, the arm describes a more or less complicated movement and has taken its final position before *the last flick of the hand, or of the forearm and hand, completes and gives point to the gesture.*

These gestures are begun by a greater or less lift or swing, from the shoulder, of the entire arm, curved. The upper arm reaches first its final position; then the forearm is swung to completion, save for its final rotation, which swings the arm and hand into position. Or, again, the entire arm, straight (but hand hanging supple), is lifted to its final position, and then the hand whips into place.

These gestures, in their shadings of variation, are almost as numerous as the thoughts that call them into being. Only a few can be cited here. Once the phases of gesture, performed successively by shoulder, upper arm, forearm, and hand, have been mastered, each singer can unaided extend greatly his repertory of gesticulation.

Of the Rigid-Arm gestures described in the previous chapter, Nos. 1, 3, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 may be executed in the rounded manner.

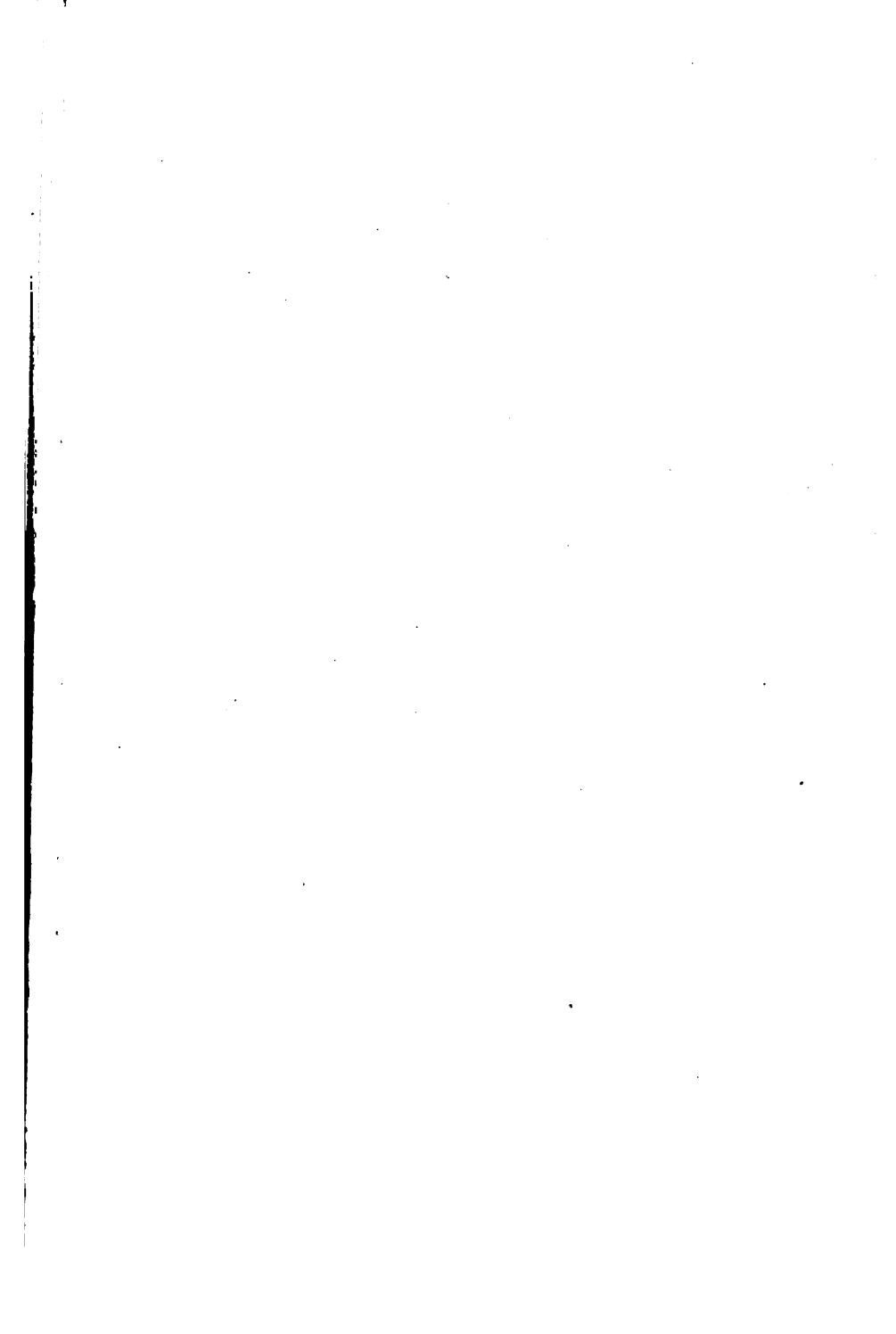
#### DISSECTION OF SIMPLE GESTURES

"*My hand on it!*" Six phases. (Class I, II.)

1. Repose (that is, arms hanging naturally at sides).









2. Whole arm swung out to one foot from thigh.
3. Forearm crook'd forward to horizontal position with hand hanging.
4. Forearm rotated with hand cupped, and hand swung up and folded back, almost touching shoulder; thumb out.
5. Arm extended front, elbow being still slightly bent and hand still somewhat contracted, palm up.
6. Completion forward through straightening of arm and frank offering of completely opened hand, fingers together, thumb out.

*"Bravura."* Seven phases. (Class I, II, III.) (Conventional gesture: useful for aria terminations; when executed with somewhat restricted sweep expressing also gayety, nonchalance, indifference. See illustrations accompanying. May also be executed simultaneously with both arms.)

1. Repose.
2. Right arm swung out from side; hand hanging.
3. Hand (moving to left) in front of left breast, palm in, thumb slightly up.
4. Hand (only) flicked up to  $\frac{1}{8}$  elevation, fingers separated in overlap, palm facing left of jaw, thumb somewhat jutting.
5. (Arm moving to right and hand falling); upper arm horizontal in side axis; forearm crook'd forward; hand hanging.
6. Arm almost straight at  $\frac{1}{8}$  elevation; hand hanging.
7. Simultaneous hand completion and forearm rotation; arm slightly bent at elbow; fingers overlapping, or as in illustration.

N. B. In order to conform to illustration, this gesture is described as being made with the right arm.

**"Never!"** Six phases. (May also be executed simultaneously with both arms.) (Class I, II, III.)

1. Repose.
2. Arm swung out straight away from side, extended, and fingers hanging.
3. Hand brought through forward curve to forehead, fingers still hanging and separated.
4. Hand, upon reaching forehead, is rotated palm outward.
5. Arm is swung horizontally to left again, stopping in line of side axis, but hand is still forward of said axis.
6. Hand completion, whole arm forming straight line, with palm turned backward.

**"Take him away!"** (or) **"You shall perish!"** Five phases. (Class I, II, III.)

1. Repose.
2. Arm swung out horizontally to left in side axis, index finger disengaged, but all fingers hanging.
3. Index finger swung far across body to right shoulder, other three fingers being almost folded against palm.
4. Index stiffened in front of breast on way back, and arm, thus crook'd, is carried horizontally back to left until the upper arm is in side axis; body accompanies slightly.
5. Forearm and hand together complete, the whole arm forming a straight line in side axis; note the position for the hand, the index

finger tensely pointing, the thumb down, the other three fingers folded against the palm.

*"That is the villain!"* (Class I, II, III.)

1. Repose.
2. Arm swung out at side; index disengaged.
3. Index raised through side axis above head, elbow remaining crook'd in side axis.
4. Same curve of arm and hand, index brought down at 15 inches in front of the face.
5. Whole arm shot out, in front axis, in a straight line toward the accused; hand as in 5, above.

*"Farewell!"* (Class I, II, III.)

1. Right arm loosely at side; left arm is swung out from side; fingers loosely separated.
2. Hand (palm in) brought—through a curve—to breast at neck; hand cupped slightly.
3. Arm is straightened toward person addressed; the hand (at  $\frac{5}{8}$  elevation) is still cupped, palm down, and folded in toward forearm.
4. Completion, at same level, through straightening of hand toward person addressed; palm turned outward and somewhat upward.

*"But come back to me!"* (The attitude of this completed gesture expresses a lover's vows of undying affection.) (Class II [I, III].)

1. Repose.
2. Arm out from side, fingers separated somewhat.
3. Arm swung around and up, palm toward face, till the index and middle fingernails touch middle of forehead.
4. Arm completion straight toward person besought.



5. Hand completion, *idem*, palm up, fingers somewhat separated; regard, beseeching.

**"Exultation!"** (Class I, II [III].)

1. Repose.
2. Arms swung out at sides, fingers well separated, palms down.
3. Arms lifted to horizontal and at same time hands swung through wide curve and crossed on breast, the hands being cupped, the fingertips and thumb-tips touching breast.
4. Arms are swung up and out to completion, somewhat in front of side axis, and at  $\frac{3}{4}$  elevation.
5. Hands snap open to completion, fingers and thumb up and separated, palm forward and outward.

**"What I feel!"** (Class I, II, III.)

1. Repose.
2. The arms, somewhat crook'd at elbows, hands partly hanging, are lifted to  $\frac{3}{8}$  elevation in side axis.
3. Forearms are swung forward, and hands, outspreading flat as they reach the body, are struck against breast on either side below level of armpits and are held there (contact from wrist to fingertips). The hands are three inches apart at fingertips. The elbows may be in side axis (more ample attitude) or pressed against ribs.

**"A treasure dearer than life!"** (Class I, II, III.)

1. Repose.
2. As 2 in "What I feel!"

3. Forearms are swung round toward the body and the hands are crossed and "cupped" on breast; elbows may be drawn forward or pressed against ribs.

*"Grief; desolation!"* (Seated.)

1. Left knee advanced midway between front and side axes; left hand on knee, right hand hanging inert at hip, right foot trailing back to right.
2. Arm (left) lifted out to left.
3. Fingers brought through forward curve and their backs laid against forehead.
4. Body rocked somewhat to right and backward, fingers still against forehead.
5. Hand (fingers crook'd) lifted well above head, at same time head bent slowly to left, and left temple laid against left biceps.
6. Simultaneously and slowly body bends forward to left, head sinks onto breast, hand (fingers still crook'd inertly) falls, palm down, onto left knee.

*"Oh, that there were hope!"* (or) *"Grief."* (Seated.)

1. Same leg position as in preceding.
2. Arms straightened out in side axis, hands at level of hips, fingers separated and straight.
3. Simultaneously glance lifted heavenward and arms lifted forward.
4. As glance reaches highest point, hands are clasped fervently together above and in front of forehead.
5. Hands sink to upturned forehead, against which thumbs (at wrist) are pressed.

6. As head sinks onto breast, clasped hands are lifted (till arms are straight) and then allowed to fall forward onto left knee.

*"Rage."* (Seated.)

1. Same leg position as in preceding (or both feet may be planted on floor in line of respective thighs).
2. Both arms suddenly straightened out in side axis, hands at level of hips; fingers tensely hooked, palms down.
3. Arms are raised above head till fingertips touch, elbows being in side axis and at level of ears; palms turned forward.
4. Arm completion: arms are swung tensely down (contraction of back muscles—rhomboid, trapezium) in side axis.
5. When hands have reached level of waist, forearms and hands complete through their violent rotation from palms downward to palms forward (in side axis or to its rear).

This dissection is solely for study. In actual execution the gestures are, of course, not segmented, but form a continuous movement from start to finish.

NOTE. Class numerals in brackets mean that the gesture in such classes of attitude is possible, but less pertinent to the sentiment.

## CHAPTER V

### CLASSIFICATION OF GESTURES (Continued)

#### FOREARM GESTURES; THE HANDS.

In forearm gestures, the upper arm is inactive, being close to or against the side. The gestures that the forearm and hand can execute are therefore somewhat limited and are incapable of sweep. Nevertheless, they are fairly numerous and are extremely useful in asides, in dissimulation and plottings, in character rôles, in scenes of real life, and in Opéra Comique, for instance *La Navarraise*, *Pagliacci*, *Le Maître de Chapelle*, etc. In fact, through the various combinations of hand or fist, index finger, thumb, several or all of the fingers, a number of these forearm gestures may be added to the equipment that every lyric actor ought to possess.

Fix the upper arm to the side and thus go through the whole-arm rounded gestures (see Chapter IV); that is, through those of their phases capable of being performed without the intervention of the upper arms. This will give an idea of their range. However, it is to be remembered that in these forearm gestures a certain amount of play is allowed to the upper arm.

One of the most useful gestures for one or both arms is comprised in the simple rotation of the forearm and hand. The arm, being extended forward,  $\frac{3}{8}$  elevation, the open hand—fingers slightly separated, palm up—is rotated to the palm-forward position at  $\frac{5}{8}$  elevation. The first

of these arm attitudes (palm up) expresses "What you say is true," or "There is no reason to be angry," etc.

The second arm position expresses "But nevertheless," with the ensuing statement of the other side of the question under discussion; or "Be calm," etc. (See illustrations accompanying.)

This rotation and its reversal introduce variety where the sentiments expressed in the text are of restricted range and cannot justify a number of different gestures.

### THE HANDS

The position of the hands and fingers can mar an otherwise perfect attitude or gesture.

In the fingertips lies the ultimate secret of vivid, telling, compelling expression in gesture and attitude. The French say: "Act the play with the ends of your fingers." *Sense your fingertips*; have them *tense*, even with a flat hand, in all expressions of intensity, whether in fear, love, hate, joy, grief, anger, etc. On the contrary, nerveless fingers accompany fatigue, powerlessness, consternation, depression. A sinister impression is conveyed by constantly crook'd fingers.

*To be avoided*: The signpost gesture, namely, the open, perfectly flat hand, thumb up, at the end of the straight, stiff arm.

If you fix your left elbow against your waist at its side, with only the forearm and hand free, and experiment upon the different ideas in whose expression the hand can aid, their variety will surprise you. Here are a few:





**D<sup>1</sup>**  
**Forearm Gesture (Class I Attitude)**



D<sup>2</sup>





*Palm up:*

1. The hand perfectly flat, thumb at right angles to joined fingers, forearm horizontal = *Loyalty, Frankness, Acceptance.*
2. Hand a trifle more relaxed than in 1, fingers slightly overlapping, thumb nearer fingers than in 1 = *Urbanity, Polite Argument.*
3. Fingers curled further than in 2, thumb against index joint = *Mendicity.*
4. Same as in 2, except thumb against base of index = *Insinuation.*
5. Hand, including knuckle-joints of fingers, flat; fingers, slightly separated, their other joints being crook'd; thumb against side of index = *Supplication.*
6. Hand slightly cupped, fingers slightly separated and tensely crook'd = *Threatening Argument.*
7. Same as 6, with fingers still more crook'd and tense = *Revenge.*
8. Hand cupped, thumb and forefinger extended tensely (at right angles to one another), other three fingers folded onto palm = *Menace.*
9. Same as 8, index extended, but thumb folded onto other fingers = *Prediction.*

*Palm backward:*

10. Hand as in 9, bent up vertically from wrist; arm  $\frac{3}{4}$  elevation = *Emphasis.*
11. Same as 10, but forefinger touches forehead or cheek = *Reflection.*
12. Same as 10, but index touching end of nose (familiar gesture) = *Secrecy.*
13. Same as 10, with forefinger on lips = "*Be silent.*"

*Palm forward:*

14. Same as 13, but flat of forefinger's nail pressed against lips = *"Don't tell it."*
15. Same as 14, with hand brought down forward to a  $\frac{3}{4}$  elevation = *Insistence*.
16. Same as 15, with index vertical = *Warning*.

*Left palm to right:*

17. Same as in 16, but palm facing to right = *Emphasis*, but less strong than 10.
18. Same as in 17, but arm and index at  $\frac{3}{4}$  elevation = *Warning*.
19. Same as in 18, with arm and index horizontal = *Indication* (*"That's he!"*) or *Prediction*.
20. Same as 17, but index touching right side of nose = *Secrecy between familiars*.

*Palm down:*

21. Same as 19, but palm down = *Insistence* (*"Mark well this point!"*) or *Contradiction*.
22. Same as 7, with palm facing down = *Male-diction*.

All these are motionless attitudes. In many of them a slight shaking of the hand and arm will intensify their expressiveness.

The writer asks the reader to understand that the above are not asserted to be the only interpretations of these various attitudes; and, on the other hand, the reader ought not to exclaim: "These distinctions are too subtle!" The more shadings of gesture at your command, the more artistic and interesting will be your acting, and the more surely you will avoid monotony and sameness in your various rôles.

## CHAPTER VI

### ATTITUDES

#### CLASSIFICATION : MODIFICATIONS.

Strictly speaking, attitude begins where gesture finishes. The gesture, frozen into immobility at the moment of its completion, becomes an attitude. The attitudes of the body in standing may be divided into three classes, each containing subdivisions and each capable of varied dramatic significance.

**Class I.** Feet together, weight on one foot or on both feet.

**Class II.** One foot advanced, weight thereon.

**Class III.** One foot drawn back, weight thereon.

Each of these may be subdivided into:

#### HEAD ERECT AND HEAD BENT

and each is capable of conveying impressions that vary with the nature of the glance and with the changing positions of the head, the arms, the hands, the fingers, the legs, and the feet.

#### CLASS I.

**Body upright; head erect:** For the presentation of an ordinary state of mind (exclusive of character parts or marked parts, such as jesters, witches,

criminals, cripples) the head is erect, the regard calm (and kept on a level with the first balcony); the weight is on the two feet or shifted onto either foot (but with the heels 3 or 4 inches—never more than 6 inches—apart). The arms hang loosely at the sides, and the base of the thumb does not quite touch the thigh. The elbow may be slightly arched away from the body; this lends more amplitude to the appearance. The centre of equilibrium is felt, muscularly, in the centre of the back, about three inches below the waist-line.

This position expresses calm, authority, satisfaction (see C<sup>1</sup> illustration, page 26, "Repose"); but, nevertheless, with chin advanced, rolling eyes, swaying head, and fingers clutching at hair, this class of attitude may also express impatience, exasperation, or fury.

**Head bent:** Maintaining the same attitude, bend the head forward more or less, and you will express passivity, listening, meditation, suffering, grief. (See end of this Chapter: "A Feminine Attitude.") Droop further the head and shoulders, separate the arms slightly from the body, open the hands palm downward, and you portray consternation. Conserve the preceding attitude, but let the hands and arms drop to the sides, and you are the embodiment of defeat or fatigue.

**Comic attitude:** Hands spread wide or folded one over the other on stomach. Legs wide and bent at knee. Arms akimbo (as near as position of hands permits). Mouth slightly open, underlip pendulous. Eyes important—bulging, staring, leering, squinting. Various positions of head.

## CLASS II

**Body inclined forward; head erect:** Incline the body forward, the weight on the forward foot, the toes only of rear foot touching the ground, head erect. (Note that if the weight is between the two feet the attitude is less affirmative, or its import is modified, or [see Chapter on "Gesture," page 16] it forms a transition—a bridge—between two distinctly formed and more definite postures.) This attitude expresses, according to the varying positions of the arms and hands, as well as of the varying facial expression, *Affirmation*, *Contradiction*, *Accusation*, *Reproach*, *Vehemence*, *Ardor*; also *Supplication*, and *Fear*. (Illustration, facing page 23.)

With the head bent, the same forward inclination of the body and the same position of the feet—but with the rear foot *flat* on the ground—conveys, according to the arm and hand postures, *Surrender*, *Humility*, *Prayer*. Furthermore, in these, the shoulders are drooped, the knees may be bent, and all muscles are less tense.

## CLASS III

**Body inclined backward; head erect:** 1. This position, weight on rear foot, head erect, expresses *Repulsion*, *Refusal*, *Scorn*, *Accusation*, *Fear*. (Illustration, page 43.)

2. Same inclination of body, but one foot far behind the other = *Mental Anguish* or *Stress*.

With the head bent on breast and same attitude as No. 2 = *Grievous Bodily Hurt* or *Stunning Moral Shock*.

Body inclined slightly backward, head likewise; feet together (heels 3 inches apart), weight on both, legs straight and arms wide, hands open with palms turned forward = *Joy, Jubilation, Relief after Anxiety*; also *Martyrdom or Suffering* (with a different facial expression). (This last picture may be portrayed also by: one foot behind the other, the weight between them = Class I attitude.)

#### MODIFICATIONS OF THE UPRIGHT ATTITUDE BY SIDEWISE INCLINATION OF THE BODY.

For many of such attitudes, the secret of their successful realization lies in the hip-joint, in its inflection to right or left. A few of them (capable of further modification and varied application by a skillful plastic artist) are as follows:

They are addressed to a protagonist on the mimic's left.

1. Disdain; Disgust: Hips thrown to the **Right**.
2. Revenge, Hate: “
3. Leering: “
4. Farewell, Renunciation: “
5. Allurement: “
6. Invitation: Hips thrown to the **Left**.
7. “My love for thee”: “
8. Insolent defiance: “
9. {
  - A. Regretful Refusal: Hips to **Right**.
  - B. Regretful, but firm, Refusal: Hips to **Left**.
  - C. Antipathetic Refusal: **Class III**.
  - D. Reaffirmed Refusal: **Class I**.
  - E. Insistent Refusal: **Class II**.
10. Flight, or Fear of Danger from Overhead.

---

**HIPS THROWN TO RIGHT.****1. *Disdain, Disgust.***

Right hip thrown to right; left leg inbent to right; chin sunk and drawn against neck; arms hanging at sides; curling lip; glance to left.

**2. *Revenge, Hate.***

Body and hips inclined to right, but head and chin inclined to left shoulder; arms at sides and hands clenched or fingers hooked; glance to left; appropriate facial expression.

**3. *A Disputatious Leering.***

Attitude No. 2, with the hip-joint further to the right, but head and left shoulder above left foot; arms hanging at sides, or arms akimbo with backs of hands resting against hips; glance to the left.

**4. *Renouncement, Farewell.***

The hips thrown to the right, the right leg straight and firm; the left leg lax, its knee inbent toward right knee; head and body inclined to right; arms hanging at sides; glance to the left; appropriate facial expression.

**5. *Allurement.***

(a') Hips thrown to right (or left); left arm passed across breast; right arm extended to right; both hands—all fingers extended—"pointing the way" (to the right); head well up and alluring smile; glance to left.

(a'') Same position of body and head and right hand, but left hand extended to left (to-



ward protagonist). The right hand points the way; the left hand and the smile say "Come!" The fingers are almost straight; both palms turned downward, or both upward.

(a'') Head as above; hips thrown to right (or to left); the hands, with gently interlocking fingers, join at the back of the neck; the elbows are wide (in side axis) and the chest lifted high; smiling glance to left.

#### HIPS THROWN TO LEFT

##### 6. *Invitation:*

Arms, head, glance, expression as in "Allurement a'", but hips thrown to left; left palm up.

##### 7. *"My love for thee!"*

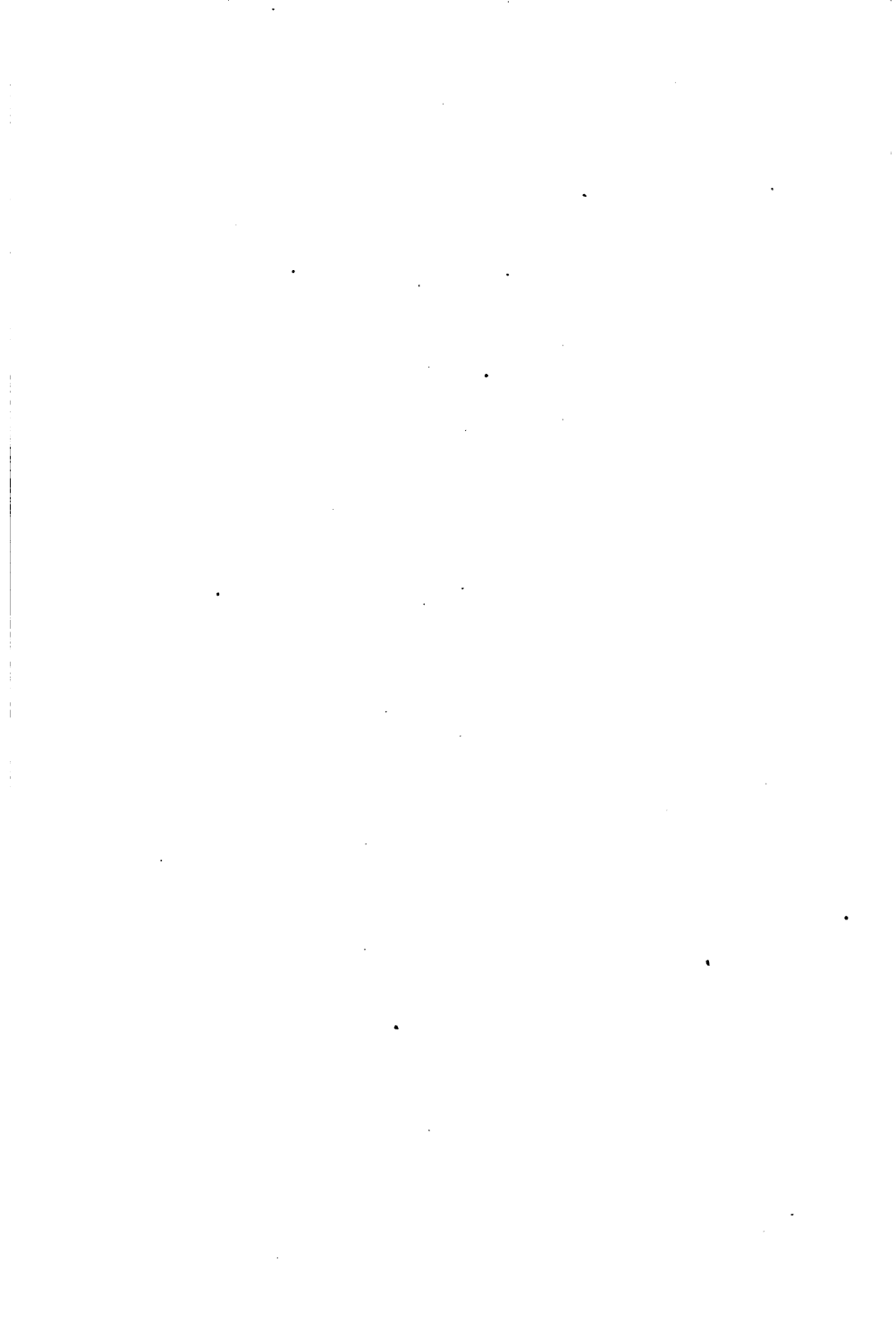
Hips thrown to left; right hand cupped on breast; other hand palm down (fingers almost straight), extended toward beloved at left. (This is less impassioned, more languorous or lukewarm than a pure Class II attitude.)

##### 8. *Insolent Defiance:*

Hips thrown to left; left leg straight; right shoulder and head over right foot; chin aggressive, high; glance to left; arms at sides but slightly bent out at elbows; fists not quite closed, as if grasping a weapon; chest high.

##### 9. *Refusal:*

A. *Regretful Refusal:* Hips to right; head bent to right or left; left arm, a little in front of "side axis," raised at " $\frac{3}{4}$  elevation" and with palm toward protagonist (herein lies the refusal); right arm hanging at side, hand easily open,





**E**

**Antipathetic Refusal (Class III Attitude)**

palm turned to rear; head erect; glance front; facial expression of regret.

B. Regretful, but firm, Refusal. Hips to left; head bent to right; otherwise, attitude as in A.

C. Antipathetic Refusal. (Class III attitude.) Weight on rear foot; forward (left) leg straight; left hand vertical; palm outward, pushed out at arm's length in front of forehead, or the hand, similarly vertical, may be brought to the right of the chin, the thumb touching the collar-bone (herein lies the refusal; also see illustration, opposite); the right arm is in side axis at  $\frac{1}{4}$  elevation, its hand being open, palm down and thumb forward; chin up; forbidding expression; glance toward protagonist; body turned slightly away from him (toward right).

D. Reaffirmed Refusal. (Class I attitude.) Weight on both feet; arms at sides and fists clenched; body and head very erect; glance fixed upon protagonist directly in front.

E. Angry, Insistent Refusal. (Class II attitude.) Weight on forward (left) foot; left fist clenched, thumb-side up; left arm rigid, swung down to  $\frac{1}{8}$  elevation in front of shoulder (see page 23, No. 8, "Rigid-Arm Gestures".) Right arm rigid and fist clenched at  $\frac{1}{8}$  elevation behind side axis; eyes on protagonist directly in front.

#### 10. *Flight, or Fear of Danger from Overhead:*

(Modification sidewise of a Class II attitude.)

The left foot, flat on floor, stretched far to the left, the body crouching over the bent right knee, the head sunk between the shoulders, and the opened hands, with separated fingers,

turned palms upward; the ends of the index fingers touching the sides of the head above the ears (or with the hands in the same position, held out sideways on a level with the head; the forearm bent at a right angle to the upper arm); glance to left or upward. (Illustration opposite.)

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Practically all the acting-gestures and attitudes employed by men may be used by women; but, on the other hand, there are gestures and attitudes essentially feminine. Some of these express phases of love, grief, and coquetry. My fair readers will, without difficulty and without aid, be able to imagine and perfect these. Thus the "Allurement" attitudes are chiefly useful for women. And "Allurement a'" would never be used but by women. Example:

*A Feminine Attitude:*

Feet together, but weight on left foot; hands clasped, or flat together, and pressed between left cheek and collar-bone (or the weight may be on the right foot and hands against right cheek); head bent slightly forward; glance  $\frac{3}{4}$  elevation and under partly lowered eyelids.

This expresses melancholy, pensive reflection, remembrance.

*Abnormal Personages:*

In the portrayal of Abnormal Personages, the legs are frequently bent at the knee, the arms are kept close to the body, and the attitudes and gestures are distorted or, at least, capricious.



**F**

**Fear in Flight (Class II, Modification Sidewise)**



## CHAPTER VII

### "COMING ON" AND "GOING OFF" STAGE; HOW TO TAKE OTHER SIDE OF STAGE; THE FEET; GENERAL REMARKS.

#### "COMING ON" AND "GOING OFF" STAGE

In stepping onto the stage from the wings, be sure that your "up-stage" leg or boot comes first into the audience's view; and when coming onto stage with an arm raised, let it always be the up-stage arm (see illustrations, page 46). Thus, if you came on from the left wings—i. e., to the audience's left—your raised arm would be the left one, and your left leg or foot would step out first into view.

The above rule holds good for the arm, *but not for the leg*, when you "come on" retreating, walking, running, or staggering *backward* in fright, apprehension, bewilderment, or in an unbalanced state. In coming on thus backward it is the *up-stage arm* that would be raised, but it is the *down-stage leg* that first appears, and the face would be slightly turned down-stage unless there be a special reason for the contrary.

If one comes on gaily—in the guise of a peasant or a gondolier, or of any character not burdened by a sense of his dignity and importance—one can skip on, precisely as a child skips, waving one's hat; up-stage leg and waving, up-stage arm come first into view, unless the up-stage arm happens



to be around a dainty peasant waist or reposing on a muscular peasant shoulder.

The same general rule holds for "going off" stage: the up-stage leg takes you out of sight of the audience, and the up-stage arm makes the final gesture; because, if made with the down-stage arm, your head would be hidden by it from the audience. In "going off" *backward*, the down-stage leg takes the step that carries the body out of the audience's sight.

### HOW TO CROSS TO RIGHT OR LEFT

Your taking the other side of the stage, in passing in front of or behind a fellow artiste, must be either effective or (what is equal praise) unobtrusive; if blundered, it becomes lamentably apparent and unnatural. You may pass:

(a) When in *intimate dialogue* with a fellow artiste and *you are doing the singing*, by posing your two hands (fingertips) on his or her corresponding shoulders, behind, and passing swiftly behind him or her without completely losing contact with said shoulders. A single step takes you across, and you can there repeat all your recent gestures and they will seem quite new to the audience.

(b) In a moment of *anger* or *impatience* you can rudely give a backhanded push to the interlocutor or make a gesture of disagreement with the arm nearest him (i. e., the up-stage arm), and pass roughly or brusquely *before* him. (See "Opera Examples," Chapter X, page 75.) (This, as all else on the stage ought to be, is arranged for and rehearsed beforehand.)





G<sup>1</sup>  
How to "Come on"



G<sup>2</sup>

How not to "Come on"



(c) With *deliberation*, with a *gesture of regret*, with *arms folded*, in *meditation*, etc., etc., you can pass slowly before your interlocutor (who will have stepped backward one or two steps up-stage in order to facilitate your passing). Don't stop immediately you get by him or her, but continue a few steps toward the footlights, at an angle; halt; then, facing toward audience, pivot toward centre of stage (in bringing feet together), so as to have your profile toward the audience; step up-stage above, or at least to the level of, your fellow artiste, who has taken two or three steps toward the wings on his side of the stage; pivot toward him or her, taking your last step backward (see 2d manner of pivoting, page 5), and the trick is done. Each will now be occupying the other's preceding place.

(d) When your ladylove's head is hidden on your manly breast, your right side (let us assume) and her left side turned to the footlights, she draws back, keeping her hands on your shoulders, while your hands clasp her wrists; she, while gazing meltingly at you, turns through a half-circle in front of you (with her back to the audience), and, lo! the passage has been accomplished, and in a very graceful manner.

(e) The protagonist occupies the centre, down-stage. You are at Left Centre. You pivot, go diagonally up to Rear Centre of stage, halt, make sure there is no one listening (or do any one of a variety of things that the dramatic situation suggests or logically permits), and then come down-stage to Right Centre. In the meantime the protagonist may have moved to your former place at Left Centre.

**NOTE.** It is to be understood that in the operatic repertory the passages are regulated by the stage managers in all opera houses at pretty much the same places in the music. Therefore, the above hints concern only the *manner* of effecting the passages.

In moments of ardor, anger, protestation, or enthusiasm, it is often useful and effective to take three or four impetuous steps down-stage toward the proscenium boxes, there to remain a moment, and thence, after pivoting, returning impetuously to one's starting-point. In doing so, one may have to pass and repass before one's interlocutor, unless this other is nearer the centre of the stage than oneself. More frequently, however, one strides down ("burning the boards") to the boxes on one's own side of the stage, and thence—after pivoting—back to starting-point. The arms, or at least one of them, may swing, and the gait is dashing; the pace rapid because of the effect to be produced and also because the time applicable to the entire proceeding may not exceed one or two measures of the music. But the body must not rock.

#### THE FEET.

It is often useful or helpful to adopt an intermediate attitude between any two attitudes (see Chapter on "Gesture," page 16). This necessitates an intermediary position of the feet, which have been, and are again to be, somewhat widely separated. This intermediate pose varies your mimicry, adding one more color to your plastic palette. Therefore, if you change radically your attitude, the feet may be brought momentarily

together before being made to occupy a final position of separation. Thus:

First position	Intermediary	Desired position
Left foot	Left foot	Left foot
Right foot	Right foot	Right foot

If you proceed from the first to the desired position without touching the left foot to the floor beside the right foot, the effect is apt to be comical and you will risk losing your balance. Of course, this refers not to walking, but to two successive stationary attitudes in which the foot positions differ. However, even in walking, if you stop momentarily, it is often well to approximately join the feet before continuing to advance in the same direction, or before altering your line of advance.

The feet have their individual eloquence: when cold, they are stamped or are lifted uneasily; in old age, they shuffle; in fatigue, they drag; in youth or gayety, they are springy (though less springy in middle-aged gayety); in criminal intent, they may creep stealthily; in drunkenness or deformity, their gait is very uneven; in well-balanced happiness, theirs is a calm elasticity. The prince and the pauper, the patrician and the peasant, each uses the feet in a characteristic manner which the actor must strive to reproduce.

**NOTE.** When the weight is on the forward foot, the toe of the rear foot must be turned neither far in nor far out.

#### GENERAL REMARKS.

Is it superfluous to add that in dejection the head is bent onto the breast, the arms hang list-



less, and the feet drag more or less; in old age, the back is bent, the head carried forward, the legs droop at the knees, the feet are shuffled and the arms are listless; in youth, the head is high, the regard audacious, the back straight, the leg tense, the step springy, the arms somewhat out from the body, and the thumb and fingers vigorous? In a daughter of the people, the gait and bearing may be heavy and awkward, or pert, saucy, and inviting attention, the smile too broad, and all the movements a bit accentuated; the vixen may plant her fists at her waist, carry her arms akimbo, and toss her head; the maid-servant's hands take refuge in her apron pockets; the heartless coquette may be of stately and disdainful mien or may hide her cruelty under a melting smile and an airiness as light as thistle-down; the contraltos often comment upon their lovers' unfaithfulness with stormy gestures and passionate upbraidings, whereas the soprano laments with melting resignation the grievous wounds of Love. Ask yourself, "How would I walk and act were I in the shoes of this personage?" The reply which your imagination gives must be adapted to the exigencies of the stage, and a process of selection must be applied so that the personage will be drawn in *strong* and *not too numerous* strokes. It is as important not to overload the delineation of a character—to overact it—as it is to draw it with sufficient vigor. And in this connection it may be well to add that, in portraying vulgar, brutal or bestial personages, it is better to err on the side of too little realism.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HOW TO SIT DOWN; TO REMAIN SEATED; TO RISE; HOW TO FALL

The importance of a singer's artistic attitude, when seated in view of the public, is evident. Clowns may loll; Salome may stretch herself at full length on a stone bench while meditating vengeance and satisfaction of desire; Tosca may fling her beautiful arms over the end of a sofa and hide her anguished head between them at the last note of "Vissi d'arte," etc., etc.; but the majority of sitting attitudes are with straight back, or at least with a body more or less upright.

Sit erect and well forward—well toward the edge of the throne or chair, or bench—and thus you will always be ready to rise gracefully and without a preliminary and undignified heaving of the body out of the depth of the seat. You will also be able to gesticulate freely. Both feet may be planted flat on the floor, the heels not quite under the edge of the seat, and the feet not too far apart; or the calf of the up-stage leg may be vertical (its heel just below its knee), and the down-stage foot drawn back against the chair's leg and resting on the inner-side edge of the boot. In this latter position the up-stage hand is on up-stage knee, and the down-stage hand at middle down-stage thigh; or each hand may grasp between thumb and forefinger the corresponding thigh at the middle (thumb on *outside*, fingers on *inside* of thigh).

Note that if the mental attitude is *haughty* or *lofty*, one hand will be on knee and the other at middle thigh; if the mental attitude is *disdainful* or *indifferent*, both hands will rest at middle thigh; but if it is *earnest* or *somewhat angry*, both hands will be on knees and body inclined forward. If the seat be an armchair, a Gothic stall, or a curule, the hands will naturally clasp its arm ends.

All of the gestures given in this work may be executed when the actor is seated. If the seat be an armless chair, this execution is easy, but an armchair is somewhat embarrassing. The student must himself work out of this small difficulty.

*To sit down majestically.* Stand erect, with arms hanging (thumbs touching thighs); have the heels well under the forward edge of the seat or chair (make sure of this in advance, without turning around, by feeling with your legs against the edge of the seat); and then, keeping the back straight, the head erect, and the glance level, sit down deliberately by bending strongly and easily the legs at the hips and the knees, and let the hands slip down over the knees, there to remain. Do not look down at the floor in front of you as you seat yourself, and, above all, avoid the comic effect produced by looking anxiously behind you lest you should miss the chair. To be sure, if you are playing a part of no refinement—for instance, Lescaut in “Manon”—you will sit down the *wrong way*, that is, you will let your head sink low in front of your body as you seat yourself.

In *consternation*, one sits more suddenly and with downcast glance; in *shame*, slowly and with downcast glance.

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### HOW TO RISE.

In rising, proceed in exactly contrary fashion, i. e., have the heels well under you and, keeping the back straight, head erect, and regard level, rise by straightening the legs and inclining the body forward from the waist ever so little.

In *shame*, *consternation*, or *weariness*, the head is bent, and one leans the shoulders forward in rising; the hands seem loth to quit the knees and to slip up the thighs and off at their sides as the legs straighten.

If in *despair*, the glance may be heavenward as one rises, but the shoulders will droop.

When *meditating vengeance* or *dissimulating rage*, the head will be erect but sunk between the shoulders as you rise, the glance travelling slowly from side to side under lowered upper lids; the fists are clenched and the chest will be filled bursting-full of air retained a long moment and then expired suddenly, as though the pent-up emotions must escape violently.

In *intended treachery*, the manner of rising and of standing subsequently will be the same as in the last preceding case (without the pent-up breath), except that the glance will be shifty.

### HOW TO FALL.

The stage fall is effective; and it is a legitimate effect, because more and more effective the truer it is to nature.

For an opera singer, it is imperative to know how to fall. Ridicule must be avoided (and also broken bones and scraped noses).

Sometimes a conveniently posted male relative or lover stands ready to catch, sustain, and lower to the ground the expiring prima donna—and this at a spot and at an angle appropriate for the ensuing action or tableau. But Valentine falls unaided when pierced by Catholic bullets; Carmen crashes to the ground under José's navaja; and Gioconda is stricken by her own hand. Likewise, Sélika, Ortrud, Mireille, Anita, and Butterfly pitch to mother earth; Nélusko, Don Juan, Telramund, Rigoletto, Scarpia, Pelléas, and Don Quichotte drop, never to rise again (until resuscitated by a curtain call), as do also Otello, Gérald, Matho, Mime, Tristan, and various others.

It will not do to fall straight up-stage, with feet to footlights, so that from the orchestra stalls one sees two boot soles against the horizon of a comfortable waist-line. Nor, again, is it wise to keel over on the back, like a toy soldier, stiff as a poker—"all at once, and nothing first." This is unreal—a circus trick.

One may sink or fall on a bench and thence collapse to the ground; one may wilt at the top of a flight of stairs and then roll down them, though this last is of doubtful availability for a woman. The writer has seen Nedda use it at the end of Pagliacci, and the sight of her revolving calves certainly diminished the tragic effect of the situation. It would have been preferable for her to fall on her back on the booth's stage, with her head and arms hanging down on the steps. (And this would facilitate and render more natural Canio's knifing of Sylvio as he dashes up the steps to aid Nedda.) Cavaradossi must crumble for-











ward on his face when annihilated by the firing squad. But the forearms and hands, swung out (to start the fall, and because it is the physical truth) in front of the face, strike the floor the fraction of a second sooner than the rest of the body, and thus the face cushions against them instead of hitting the floor.

The slope of the stage makes it easier to fall up-stage; "it's not such a long way to the ground"; the head and body ought to slant more or less toward the side wings. However, generally, the more effective fall is with head down-stage, at an angle to footlights; at what angle will depend upon the subsequent requirements of your fellow actors.

The following violent fall can be executed without risk of serious bruises. It should be on the side, more or less, even when it seems to be directly upon the back.

Suppose you fall on the right side; the right foot is somewhat advanced, the knees bent out to the right; the body topples over, and the order of contact with the floor is—

Right knee (exterior face), right hip;

Left hand (cupped, palm down) strikes floor in front of right shoulder;

Right hand (cupped, palm down), the right arm having been extended straight out to right or at a  $\frac{5}{8}$  elevation; the triceps muscles, the bunch of muscles at back wall of armpit, and those covering ribs below it, cushion the body's impact; and you are prone with a crash (and amid dust, alas!). Even when staggering backward, body bent back over heels, and hands clutching at empty air,

give a slight turn to right or left as you drop, and approximate this manner of falling.

You are now stretched diagonally across the stage, head to the right and farther down-stage than your feet. Should it then be necessary to lift yourself to a half-sitting position, first roll your face and breast further over toward the floor, flatten both hands on the floor, draw left hand under breast, draw right hand in toward right hip by a series of effortful jerks (during these efforts you reproduce the lines of the statue of the "Dying Gladiator") which raise the body; lastly, lift the head. Your rigid arms, hands flat on the floor, are supporting you (X).

Now, in order to rise erect by degrees (with apparent effort), you slip the hands along the floor to the left, so as to get them well in front of you; then draw the right knee forward between the hands, leaving the left leg stretched out behind and to the left. (All this manœuvre serves to conceal, behind the shoulders and body, the ungraceful humping of the lower back.) You are now supported by fingertips (arms straight), right knee, and left toes. Lift left hand from floor and draw left leg forward. You now rest upon right fingertips, right knee and left foot (under body; left arm resting on left knee), and are ready to rise erect. (See illustrations opposite.)

When prone on the face, never have your feet directly down-stage; and, when rising from this prone position, draw the hands under the shoulders, which you heave up at arm's length from the floor. Then, before rising further, turn your face and chest toward the audience so as to hide that

swelling curve at the other end of the back.

The fall and the rise may be executed slowly or rapidly, as the case requires.

It is extremely effective to let one's self fall on both knees, and with outstretched pleading arms, upon the last note of a song of supplication (as in *Rigoletto's* big aria before the courtiers), but it is hard on the knees and harder on the silk tights or brocades that cover them.

#### HOW TO DRAG ONE'S SELF ALONG STAGE.

Let us suppose that, having lifted yourself from the prone to the half-sitting position, you must drag yourself along stage to the feet of him (or her) you would implore (as in *Aida*, Act III, Duo between *Aida* and *Amonasro*). This is difficult of execution; especially for a woman, on account of her dress. In the first place, if you have not been able to fall with your head toward the personage to be approached, you must, as you rise to the half-sitting position, walk your body, with your hands, round toward your interlocutor so that your feet will be stretched away from him (and this with as little movement of the hind-quarters as possible). Then, being in the half-sitting position (described at X in "How to Fall"), you further extend the arms (flat-handed on the stage), draw the legs up toward the body, and, by a pull on the arms, advance by dragging yourself again up to a half-sitting posture. Repeat this manoeuvre as often as necessary, but halt frequently between the repetitions, because its regular sequence risks comicality. Also, to avoid

this danger, you may from time to time vary the advance by rising on the fingertips, one foot dragging out behind (the down-stage one), and draw the other knee forward between the arms almost against your breast (its foot resting on stage); then advance the hands further, let your up-stage hip down to floor, and repeat original manœuvre. When at the feet of the cause of your humiliation, you lift yourself on both knees and seize his or her hand in both yours; run your up-stage hand up his arm to the shoulder, in order to reach which you lift the up-stage leg and pose its foot on the floor. Thus, with the up-stage arm on the interlocutor's shoulder, the down-stage hand can still grasp his hand, which gives you a means of rising; or you may, with down-stage hand, continue to clutch at his breast in sobbing appeal. It is well not to prolong unduly the kneeling position, because (*a*) it is unfavorable for singing; and (*b*) the audience tires of the sight unless you are vocally and histrionically capable of sustained temperamental intensity.

Women singers may advance along the floor as described above, or by walking forward on the knees, body upright; or by successive steps forward when in the position of one knee (down-stage one) on the floor, and the up-stage leg bent at knee, the up-stage foot being on the floor.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE EYES

Every one knows that the expressions of the eyes are varied: shifty, calm, fixed, haggard, vivacious, dreamy, veiling tears, furious, cruel, tender, ironic, languorous, contemptuous, etc., etc. A little thought will also make it clear that their expression depends almost totally upon the surrounding features—the forehead, eyebrows, eyelids, cheeks, and skin under the eyes and at their corners. The eyes are the soul of Facial Expression, and their use must be studied and decided upon in connection therewith.

The *direction* of the regard is of paramount importance. The indications for the same must be sought in the sense of the text. When singing a duo, one looks at one's interlocutor—for a part of the time—sufficiently (as will be explained in Chapter XII, page 83) to establish and maintain in the minds of the public a relation between the two singers. The singer must obtain this effect also when addressing an inanimate object visible on the stage or supposed to be situated in the wings out of sight of the audience. An absent person is addressed as though seen out at the level of the first balcony; a vision of purity is apostrophized at the height of the second balcony; a heavenly apparition seems to be at the height of "ye gallery gods," to which region the eyes may also turn to portray indifference (a glance sideways) or despair (a glance to the chandelier); a

repugnant or mysterious, or awe-inspiring evocation calls for a fixed regard toward the level of the farthest row of orchestra stalls.

In portraying **Meditation**, you may droop the lids somewhat, but do not look at the floor at your feet. Keep the eyes directed toward the footlights, or even on a level with the first rows of the orchestra stalls. The audience should invariably see your eyes (or your eyelids, if your eyes are shut) unless they are purposely hidden (as in grief) by one or both hands, or by one or both arms. *The eye keeps the actor en rapport with his audience.*

The eyes *must not wander*, nor look in too many different directions during singing or silent acting. Such directions (like the gestures, see Chapter on "Gesture," page 12) must be decided upon in advance. Roaming eyes, eyes seeking the floor or wandering in indecision, "not knowing just where to look"; frequently winking eyelids, or that trying fashion some singers have of dropping the eyelids (closing the eyes) for long moments while singing—each of these constitutes a hideous and painful bore to the annoyed spectator. Such misuse of the eyes is destructive of all dramatic verisimilitude.

Let us consider the use of the eyes in the Recitative of Micaëla before her Aria "Je dis que rien ne m'épouvante" (*Carmen*, Act III):

Micaëla has come on with faltering step and with apprehensive glances around upon the rocky walls of the smugglers' retreat. Her left hand is pressed against her breast; her right arm, hand open, palm down, is in side axis at  $\frac{1}{4}$  elevation.

She advances part way down the centre of the stage, takes Class I attitude and, after a slow-moving glance to the right and another to the left, directs her eyes (1) slowly to the centre of first balcony, keeping them there while she sings:

C'est des contrebandiers le refuge ordinaire.

It is here that the smugglers are known to assemble.

Lowering the glance a trifle and directing it a bit to the left (2) for:

Il est ici!

José is here!

and as much to the right (3) for:

Je le verrai.

I'll see him soon.

she next (4) raises the eyes to the second balcony and, keeping them there (as though she perceived a vision embodying her duty) and at the same time softly clasping her hands against her breast and taking two steps forward (Class I), she finishes with somewhat the soft expression of a Joan of Arc:

Et le devoir que m'impose sa mère,

Sans faiblir je l'accomplirai.

The duty laid upon me by his mother

Shall be done, and without a fear.

On the final "-rai," she makes a determined little stroke downward with her two hands still clasped together. So that we perceive four sustained "aimings" of the eyes, at four "targets" close together, to be sufficient for the singing of this recitative.



## CHAPTER X

### OPERA EXAMPLES OF GLANCE, GESTURE, AND ATTITUDE

These examples are purposely chosen from familiar operas or operatic arias. They are short, the longest covering only two pages of a piano score. No one will complain of this. There is plenty to do, even in the shortest. Some may even think there is too much. But students who take the trouble to understand and assimilate, through frequent practice, the instructions given in the example appropriate to their voice and physique, will increase most satisfactorily their comprehension of operatic acting, which is "acting to music," or "rhythmic acting."

#### 1. DRAMATIC SOPRANO.

##### *Aida, Act I.*

Aida, carried away by her pride in Radamès, has joined with her captors in wishing him victory against her own Ethiopian people. Like a flash, she has beheld the transformation wrought in her soul and she is terrified at the revelation. An inevitable and tragic struggle will ensue between her love and her filial affection and patriotism, a contest in which she can but be the chief victim.

The other personages leave the stage at rear centre; Aida, looking after them, remains rooted to the spot (left centre, halfway up-stage), bend-

ing under the stress of emotion. As she is about to attack the recitative, her gaze has travelled around from the back of the stage to the footlights at far right corner of stage. She is somewhat bowed—right profile to audience—and her arms are in side axis,  $\frac{1}{8}$  elevation; hand  $\frac{3}{4}$  open, palm forward, Class I attitude, left foot forward. Motionless, and in dolorous wonder, she exclaims:

Ritorna vincitor! . . .

E dal mio labbro uscì l'empia parola!

May laurels crown thy brow! . . .

What! Can my lips pronounce language so impious?

In orchestral chords E, E, E, she turns toward audience, gaze “fix” at centre of first balcony, and on E, D $\sharp$ , E, she falls back a step onto right foot (Class I), and then adds, self-accusingly:

Vincitor del padre mio

V

Wish him victory o'er my father

V

while bringing right arm (hand already widely extended, palm down) up and around onto breast under chin, where it strikes at V as she makes a step forward with right foot (Class II). This attitude holds good until chords following “m'è forza.” During

Di lui che impugna l'armi per me

V

v

v

O'er him who wages war but that I

V

v

v

the left arm—hand flat, palm forward, fingers together, thumb out—is swept up and backward to  $\frac{5}{8}$  elevation, rear of side axis; completes (palm



in a questioning gesture. (as at "Ritorna vincitore!"). Simultaneously (V) one step forward, right foot, Class II.

Upon the orchestral phrase B, A, A $\sharp$ , G $\sharp$ , fists  
V  
clench as left arm is swept across body and right arm out into side axis—both  $\frac{1}{4}$  elevation, wrists down; body accompanies to right, with short shift of right foot (sidewise modification of Class I); head and gaze turn to left,  $\frac{5}{8}$  elevation (as Aida's thoughts revert to the triumphant Radamès). All this completes at V, and she continues:

Ond'io lo vegga  
E'en now I see him

in which her attitude does not change.

Then on "tinto" (stained), the hands open flat  
V V

(up at right angles to motionless arms) and, without shifting the feet, the weight goes onto rear (left) leg (bent, and right leg straight—Class III); during the rest of this phrase:

Del sangue amato  
With their blood so cherished

the hands move at same level slowly out in front of body, and the glance travels back to just above the hands, which it meets "front" (expressing avoidance of a painful sight). In

Trionfar nel plauso dell' Egizie coorti  
V

'Mid the clam'rous triumph of Egyptian battalions  
V

the eyes glance upward to left, second balcony, the open hands are brought to either side against

the head behind the ears, where the fingertips pose in a half-circle as though to shut out these clamors. Aida's attitude (Class III) has not yet changed.

The eyes "fix" at (audience's) right end of foot-lights as Aida declaims:

E dietro il carro  
V  
Behind his chariot  
V

the weight shifts to right foot at V, the body slightly crouching, and the left arm ( $\frac{3}{8}$  elevation, hand flat, fingers separated, palm down), points straight out in the direction of the gaze (as though evoking the outrageous spectacle of her father's disgrace); simultaneously the right arm and hand duplicate this gesture backward.

Maintaining this attitude, Aida, on chord immediately following "carro," takes a step (left foot) forward toward right (direction of prompter's box); on chord after "un Re" (a king), another step (right foot) same direction; and on chord after "mio padre" (my father), a third step (left foot).

Then, in this attitude, gaze same direction, the fists are clenched and brought together, arms straight, wrists up, at  $\frac{3}{8}$  elevation, front; eyes on fists; on "di catena" (his fettered), and  
V V

immediately thereafter on "avvinto!" (captive),  
V V

the left leg—where rests the weight—and the body are straightened convulsively, the right foot draws

against the left, and both carry the weight, the head is thrown back, the eyes seek the top gallery, and the arms and hands remain joined as though fettered; all this on "-vin-". Here, near centre of stage, Aida is ready, after a change of attitude and expression, to continue with

L'insana parola.

NOTE. The *mise-en-scène* fits the Italian text, but will also be found acceptable for the English translation.

## 2. CONTRALTO.

### *Samson et Dalila; Act II, Scene 1.*

As the curtain rises, Dalila is seated on a bench, at left and  $\frac{3}{4}$  up-stage. Her right foot, flat on floor, the left one drawn back near bench, the body straight, head erect, the right hand clasping the down-stage arm of the bench, the left hand folded over the right, the arms straight, her inscrutable eyes level and "front," she meditates. From between her house, at R. C., and the bench, a path leads away to rear, down the mountain. By this path Samson will shortly come to her. Her plans for his downfall and capture are complete. She is sure of her power and confident of victory. The violence of the music's ascending octaves depicts that of her thirst for vengeance. Upon the last octave chord (C, Eb, -A-Eb) she rises resolutely and stands majestically (Class I). The right-hand fingertips rest at previous place on bench, the left arm having fallen to her side before she rose.

With body and level glance turned "front," she soliloquizes:

Samson recherchant ma présence,  
Ce soir doit venir en ces lieux.

V

To-night Samson makes his obeisance,  
This eve at my feet he will lie.

V

At "venir" she lifts right hand about twelve inches and lets its palm fall on bench border again upon the word "lieux."

V

On the whole-note chord of next measure, a flash of lightning occurs. Dalila turns her gaze rear to horizon and then "front" again, continuing:

Voici l'heure de la vengeance!

V

V

Now the hour of my vengeance hastens!

V

V

On "l'heu-" there is a secondary gesture, a lifting of the head; then, on "de," the left arm begins rising in forward diagonal axis, the hand tensely cupped, palm down (see "Vengeance," Chapter III, No. 13); the weight, which has been on right foot (left foot slightly behind right), passes onto left foot in a short step forward (at V), and, at the same time as the forearm and hand reach the horizontal (at "-gean-"), they are abruptly rotated

V

to completion, palm up (eyes still level).

There the hand remains during "qui doit satisfaire" (our gods I shall soon), lifting a little at

V

V

"-tis-" and jerking back to horizontal on "-fai-"

V

(secondary gesture); whereas on “-re nos dieux”  
V

the head lifts, the glance *idem* (second balcony), the arm and hand, without any rotation, rise in the vertical plane of their previous position to  $\frac{7}{8}$  elevation, the last three fingers curl on to palm, the index is vertical, the thumb juts to rear, there is a slight jerk to completion at “dieux,”  
V

giving accent to the gesture.

During the succeeding orchestral passage, Dalila lets her left arm fall slowly, and, allowing her right arm to slip from bench, takes a step forward with right foot, pivots on it toward left, and goes up the path to rear, on the look-out for Samson. All is solitary. She comes down-stage to left centre and, vibrant with perfidious purpose, she calls for aid to the pagan god of love: “Amour, viens aider ma faiblesse.”

### 3. TENOR.—RECITATIVE OF FAUST.

*In “Faust,” Act III (Garden Scene).*

The tenor, midway up-stage and at left centre (as seen from audience), after having watched impatiently Mephisto’s departure (rear centre of stage), turns a softer glance on Marguerite’s dwelling (at extreme right) during the orchestra’s four measures of half-notes (E $\flat$ , B $\flat$ , C $\flat$ , G, etc.). His face wears a questioning look as, pivoting “front” to weight on left (rear) foot, he brings his gaze slowly toward the middle rows of or-







## 4. BARITONE.

*Valentine ("Faust," Act IV).*

After the Soldiers' Chorus, Valentine, in Siebel's company and quite up-stage, has waved an "au revoir" to the last of his home-returning comrades. Duty is accomplished, and now for the joys of the fireside! His dear sister and he shall be once more united and, with their firm friend Siebel, will gather around the table to celebrate Valentine's safe return.

The sturdy brother is a man of camps and not of courts. His stride is heavy and his arms swing a trifle overmuch. From his place at right centre, and with his gaze on his friend at left centre, he begins roundly and jovially:

Allons, Siebel, entrons dans la maison.

V

V

Come on, Siebel, and let us enter now.

V

V

He is facing diagonally down-stage, his weight on right foot. On "-lons" his right arm swings out—fingers loose, palm turned forward—toward Siebel, and returns to his side as he takes, with left foot, the first of three steps, straight down-stage, on "-bel," the second on chord before "en-", and the third with left foot (on which "fix," Class I) on "-trons." On the second step, his eyes turn momentarily on the audience at horizontal and then return to Siebel's countenance upon "entrons."

In this scene, Siebel is always between Valentine and Marguerite's door. On "-son" (in "maison") his weight goes forward onto right foot as he

swings his straight right arm—hand open, palm up—to  $\frac{5}{8}$  elevation in the direction of his house door (jutting out from left wings, one-third way up-stage.) His glance is also directed thither, and thence returns at once to Siebel, upon whom it remains fixed until after “raison.” During the two succeeding chords he maintains this previous attitude, and then on “main” his weight goes back onto rear (left, down-stage) foot (Class III attitude, persisted in until after “raison”). For

Le verre en main

V

Come in and pledge

V

he crooks up the right forearm and hand as though holding a glass, and maintains this during “Tu me fe-” (me in the). The E on “-ras,” in “feras raison” (welcome home) is held one and one-half beat, toward the end of which duration Valentine’s forearm and hand—palm in, fingers overlapping but separated—are swung in to near his right ear, held there an instant (during “rai-”) and snapped out to complete extension toward Siebel on “-son,” rebounding in again toward chest and thence falling to hanging position at side. He starts toward Siebel with right foot, but is stopped (weight on forward right foot) by Siebel’s gesture and

Non, n’entre pas!

No! Wait awhile!

Surprised, he falls back onto left foot, and then questions with ever-growing concern:

Pourquoi?

Why wait?

during which his right arm hangs at side, his gaze fixed on Siebel. Immediately after, on the eighth-rest, his weight comes forward onto both feet, he lifts right arm to  $\frac{1}{4}$  elevation "front" (as he is facing, diagonally, down-stage), hand loosely cupped, palm vertical, index and thumb extended in Siebel's direction, the other three fingers hooked in, and adds:

Tu détournes la tête! . . .

Wherefore turn away from me?

On the ensuing eighth-rest, Valentine lifts, without rotation, his forearm and hand toward Siebel, and continues:

Ton regard fuit le mien . . .

Have you aught to conceal?

Now, on the rest preceding "Siebel!" his weight moves forward in a step onto right foot (left toe ("fixed")), he extends forearm and hand toward his friend—rotating them to palm down, same finger position—and during:

Explique-toi!

Tell me the worst!

Valentine insists with this gesture, shaking the hand slightly up and down from the wrist, one  
<sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup>  
 rapid beat for each syllable, *ex—pli—que—toi!*  
 (tell—me—the—worst!); "fix" on *toi*. He maintains this attitude of anxious questioning while Siebel says:

Eh, bien!... Non, je ne puis.

Well, then: no! Do not ask.

Valentine (whose left hand is all the time on his sword, occupied with keeping it from between his legs!!!) then ejaculates:

Que veux-tu dire?

V

Thou canst not tell me?

V

and at V throws his weight abruptly back on left foot (Class III) and flings his right arm up to straight vertical ("deferred completion"), its hand slightly cupped, palm forward, fingers somewhat separated. His gaze leaps from Siebel to his own and his sister's door. He immediately starts forward (right, left, "fix," Class II), bringing down his arm and clenching its fist as he flashes it down to right. Siebel throws himself upon Valentine, seizing his fist and pleading:

Arrête!... sois clément, Valentin!

One moment! Oh, be kind, Valentine!

Valentine, with gaze averted to public on first "laisse-moi" and to his own door on second "laisse-moi," passes his weight back over right foot, taking a step backward with left foot (right foot fast to floor) as he pulls his fist, held by Siebel, out to right (up-stage), seeking to free it. All this completes on the first "laisse-moi" (let me pass!). Then, during the voice's hold on "lai-" in the second "laisse-moi," his weight comes onto forward (right) foot, and he moves ahead impetuously with a step of the left foot, as he throws his clenched right fist forward and up to vertical, thus tearing it from Siebel's grasp (upon "-moi"). Upon reaching his door, on whose other side the revelation

of that which he dreads awaits him, he stops abruptly for an instant in hesitation (right foot forward, Class II), his gaze on the latch, his hand raised to lift it, and then bursts through and disappears into the house.

NOTE. The author of the translation used where "Faust" is sung in English has, from time to time, lightened his task by altering the original musical text, and abandoning the rendering of the French librettist's rhymes. The present writer has therefore not hesitated to modify the aforesaid translation where necessary to obtain concordance between the English prosody and Gounod's music.

## 5. BASS

### *Méphistophélès ("Faust," Act IX).*

Mephisto, stepping out of wings, rear right centre (or coming up through a trap there), appears before the startled Faust on the chord preceding "Me voici" (I reply). He thunders this without gesture, right arm at side, left hand on sword-hilt (Class I attitude). During the succeeding chords he waits, eyes fixed on Faust, enjoying the savant's evident discomfiture. He is alert, sardonic, supple, baneful, and shifty as a marsh-fire. He faces down-stage, diagonally to left. Bending forward politely, both feet together, he inquires:

D'où vient ta surprise?

V

Does wonderment seize you?

V

which he accompanies with a forearm gesture (see Chapter V, page 33); the right forearm and

hand—fingers overlapping—are swung easily up to horizontal almost “front,” where they rotate to palm up, thumb out at “-pri-”. There they remain as Mephisto continues:

Ne suis-je pas mis à ta guise?

V

Or does not my livery please you?

V

but on “à ta guise” he starts a gesture, completing it at “gui-”; the body straightens and the right hand and forearm are swung in horizontal to right side axis without rotation. Faust maintains this attitude of interrogation during orchestra’s reply. On

L’épée au côté

V

With sword at my side

V

the right hand and arm as before, palm up, swing around horizontally in front of body, motioning toward the sword-hilt (on which the left hand continues to rest); there is a jerk of the hand to completion on “-té.” Faust maintains this attitude during music’s reply.

La plume au chapeau

V

And feather in cap

V

Right hand is lifted to right of head (avoid passing it in front of face), where the hand snaps to vertical completion, palm toward face and fingers overlapping. Maintain during orchestra’s phrase.

L’escarcelle pleine

V

My purse o’erflowing

V



The right elbow is crook'd out in right side axis, and the fingers tap on purse, rebounding slightly from it, on the right side of girdle, at "plei-".

Un riche manteau sur l'épaule

A right pretty cape on my shoulder

Here the right upper arm lifts to horizontal in side axis, while the forearm, hand hanging, is lifted out to right and up, folding in on upper arm and rotating during "sur l'é-", so that the hand, bending at wrist, flicks its fingertips onto shoulder at "-pau-", whence it rebounds up to right of ear slightly higher than head. He keeps this attitude during the following two beats in the orchestra. And then upon "en somme" (I travel), the right

forearm and hand (upper arm stationary) are straightened out and down to  $\frac{3}{8}$  elevation just in side axis; palm up and flat. There it remains until in "un vrai gentilhomme" (as noblemen travel), on the cadenza upon the syllable "-hom-",



a bravura gesture (see Chapter IV, page 27) is begun and developed, completing on "-me."

All this time, the eyes have not left Faust, nor need the feet have moved. But the subsequent merry measures in the orchestra indicate the character of Mephisto's walk, and call for several jaunty paces down-stage before he continues, in substance: "Well, Doctor, now that we're acquainted, what can I do for you?"

## CHAPTER XI

### BY-PLAY

The "composing" of a part is the creation, for presentation on the stage, of a living being whose doings seem human and convincing, and whose actions, walk, and character are the inevitable and logical outcome of the passions given him and of the circumstances in which he is placed by the dramatic author—the librettist.

The great difficulty in such "composing" is the evolving of "by-play" wherein you become a veritable creator. When one has words to sing and emotions, thought out by the author, to express, it is not difficult to know what acting to do. But when you are "on" and the other fellow is doing the singing, then you have a chance to make good by imagining by-play which shall be logical and natural. (If operatic choruses are often taxed with woodenness, it is frequently the fault of the author. He has neglected to write out for their use monologues for them to recite to themselves during descriptive music, or comments they could make silently while the principals are singing. Upon these monologues and comments they could hang appropriate gestures and actions. In a word, the librettist ought to have furnished them with their by-play. Of course, he counts upon the stage-manager for this sort of thing.) However, you, as a principal, have more money and glory coming to you than a chorister, so use your mind and the experience acquired through observation

of your fellow men and women to evolve the necessary by-play. You will piece it together from the dramatic situation, from the walk in life of the various personages (which influences their gestures and actions even under strong emotion), from the words and gestures of the other personages, from the development of the drama, and from the music's continual, or at least frequent, comment upon the passions, doings and tendencies of the *dramatis personæ*.

Reflection and imagination will aid you in building up the actions of the being you are to represent and in giving verisimilitude thereunto.

Listening well to the singer who addresses you is an important part of by-play—important to you and to the “protagonist.” When so listening, you should stand further down-stage than the protagonist; one or two steps further down and one or two steps to one side of him or her. This permits the protagonist to face the audience while singing supposedly to you, and he will thus have room to make his gestures and stride about a bit, if necessary; and when it is your turn to sing—not one or two phrases, but a goodly number of measures—then you will go up-stage, the protagonist will come below you to listen to you, and you will dominate.

Furthermore, listening closely to the singer or singers who are *not* addressing themselves to you, but *upon whose words your actions depend*, is absolutely necessary.

During such listening, the general rule is “absence of gesture,” unless the contrary be clearly indicated by the situation: as would be the case





**K**  
**Listening**

in astonishment, anger, commiseration, revolt, protestation, or fear. Otherwise, content yourself with indicating the effect of the protagonist's words upon you by your facial expression—glance, mouth, nostrils, forehead, chin, cheeks—as well as by the expressiveness of your attitude; and the intensity of this expression may be such that you will make a sure impression upon the audience, despite your “absence of gesture.” But remember, that a gesture on the part of the listening actor has the effect of a spoken interruption, and that by-play should not be so powerful as to divert the attention of the audience from the principal personage, that is, the protagonist; otherwise, you defeat the composer's conception and design, and you weaken the dramatic structure by causing the audience to lose interest in the central narrative.

NOTE. When in the course of a tableau (scene) an actor on the stage hears, or listens for, some stage noise—firing, rumors of the distant mob, the gallop of a horse—he should not usually look toward the invisible source of the noise; he looks toward the audience—attitude and facial expression expectant—turning his ear in the direction whence the rumor proceeds. For instance, when Werther (Act III) listens at the door of Charlotte's room, his ear is applied to the panel, but his face and glance are turned toward the audience. (See illustration opposite.)

## CHAPTER XII

### GENERAL REFLECTIONS

#### FACIAL EXPRESSION.

This subject cannot be treated adequately within the limits of this work. All that can be said here is that it should be studied before a mirror, text in hand. Don't make too many "faces." Put yourself in the "skin of the personage," seek out the facial expressions born logically of the emotions attributed to the personage in question or resulting inevitably from the situation in which he finds himself (both in singing and in by-play). From out all these expressions retain and use only the *necessary* ones (so as to avoid the spectator's bewilderment through too great wealth of detail). Learn by heart the expressions selected, as well as the exact place of their occurrence in the music (it is a sad mistake to assume, for instance, an expression of ferocity two seconds before the insulting phrase is pronounced by your interlocutor). And link each expression to its successor, in order never to abandon the stage picture.

#### ORDER OF IMPORTANCE OF EXPRESSIVENESS IN THE PLASTIC USE OF THE HUMAN BODY

Eyes	} These being eloquent, even with the body bound.
Face	
Head	
Hands,	
Body,	
Feet.	

Partisans of "reform in acting" often exclaim: "The audience should be non-existent for a conscientious actor, and he should act as though—toward the audience—there was the 'fourth wall'," i. e., the fourth side of the place (room, square, field, palace) in which he finds himself. Now, to be sure, the petted stars, ranters, and low comedians, do sometimes spoil the scenic illusion by addressing themselves too directly to the audience and by neglecting the observance of the real-life verities flowing from the situation in which they are placed for the moment. But, nevertheless, the audience does exist, and lyric actors, especially, must *sing toward it*. And even when the artiste turns his back toward the audience, it is because the audience *should see his back*. From this fact are derived the necessary rules governing attitudes and gestures—as seen by the audience—and their observance must become second nature to the singing actor.

If the words of your song are addressed to a person up-stage or to one side of you, you must impress the audience as singing to that person (or object) while, in reality, you are turned  $\frac{3}{4}$  toward the footlights, i. e., practically facing the audience. To convey this impression you must, in the measures of music immediately preceding your song, turn directly to the object or person addressed and, having thus established definitely in the mind of the public the link between yourself and the "addressee," you then, as you begin to sing, turn gradually toward the audience. The aforesaid link is maintained and sustained by



gesticulation toward the object addressed and by an occasional turn of the head or glance in its direction.

Beware, when giving the hand in oath or in boisterous greeting, lest you be drawn off your balance by a too muscular or ill-intentioned fellow actor. *Semper paratus!* The writer remembers having had his entrance into Lillas Pastia's tavern completely spoiled by a spiteful fellow artiste (Zuniga) who, in shaking Escamillo's hand in greeting, pulled so hard and unexpectedly that the jaunty Torero lost his balance and made a most undignified dive before he could recover himself. (Whereupon one newspaper critic printed his Sherlock Holmes' opinion that Escamillo lacked ease and stage experience!!!)

Never gesticulate in front of your face, except when the sentiment requires that you hide your face from the audience or that you cover your eyes through fear or to shut out a distressing sight, real or imaginary. If, for instance, your hand is on your breast and you wish to clutch at your hair; carry your hand to your head by a curve outward from the face or up past one side of the face; and, here again ("deferred completion"), the hand, as it is swung up, is hanging loosely from the wrist, and only at the completion of the gesture does it snap into the convulsive clutching position.

Again: When gesticulating toward your left or toward a person to your left, let your left arm dominate, and avoid gestures with the right arm in front of the body (and, consequently, between

your body and the audience). Then the audience will see your gestures clearly, they being in profile and detached from your body. This is desirable, whether your face, profile, or back be turned to the spectators. Of course, when gesticulating toward your right, then the *right* arm must dominate. This rule is frequently disregarded by singers who ought to know better.

Excellent practice: The handling of a wand or staff, of a mediæval broadsword, of a sceptre, or of a similarly embarrassing emblem of authority. Their dexterous manipulation may be graceful or authoritative. The object, whatever it is, must be passed, for instance, from the left hand to the right hand before making a gesture with your left hand toward personages at your left. This passing may be executed with large sweep, ill-contained fury, or contracted crabbedness. Procure yourself a staff six feet long and do with it, in one or the other hand, a lot of walking and gesturing about your room. It will be fruitful practice: turning, advancing, retreating; addressing yourself to your loyal subjects on the right and then on the left; leaning heavily on Tannhäuser's Wanderstab; announcing to the monarch the arrival of those who crave audience, etc., etc.

When you kneel, the knee resting on the ground must be the one on the side of the audience. Thus, if your right side be turned toward the audience, the *right knee* will rest on the ground, and the *sole* of the *left foot* also. Suppose you put your foot up on a bench or rock; it must be the one *away from the audience*.

To lend amplitude to gestures and attitudes, keep the arms somewhat away from the body.

In any stooping position, don't turn the back toward the hall: dangerous—because apt to excite laughter. If you pick up an object from off the stage, it is inadmissible to stoop as you would in tying your bootlace when alone in your own room. The resultant attitude would be ugly, ungraceful, even if your back is away from the hall. Advance so as to have the object—say, a handkerchief—two or three feet in front of you. Let us suppose your left side is toward the hall. Take one step forward with the right foot, the left foot being stationary, and bend the right knee, at the same time stooping the body over it and reaching well out to seize the object with the right hand. Recover the upright position above the left foot (which has not moved, although the left leg may have bent more or less at the knee).

Another admissible, though less graceful, way is to step close to the object so that it is almost between the toes of the two feet and, keeping the body almost erect, bend the two knees outward and sink to within easy reach of and catch up the object. The Cavalier will pick up "my lady's glove" in the first way, executed with slow and sweeping grace. The second manner may be used in a modern-plot opera, but the first way is good under all circumstances.

The inclined stage accentuates the perspective thereon and lends distance to the view. In order to fit in with this intensified perspective, objects painted on up-stage scenery are drawn smaller

than they would be seen in reality. Therefore, avoid propinquity with these painted objects up-stage; the disproportion between your figure and the canvas object may be laughable. This precaution is useless in those first-class theatres using solid scenic objects instead of painted ones, but such modern methods are still far from general.

When learning a part in an opera, be sure to learn at least thirty measures of the music immediately preceding your entrances on the stage, and all of the music played and of the text sung while you are "on." Don't postpone this until stage rehearsals. Consider it a part of your rôle, and work at it all, right from the start. One should always be able to count upon one's self for one's entrance, without the aid of a stage manager.

When a man and a woman are singing a duo in an opera and he must put his arm around her waist and hold her hand while they sing, face to the audience, he should *advance the leg nearest her* and brace on the other leg less advanced, so that both his legs are visible to the audience. Whereby I mean that if the tenor's left arm is around the soprano's waist, it is his left leg that should be the more advanced, showing beside her dress at the right and *not hidden behind her*.

When a singer has been kneeling before his lady and, in an ecstasy of passion, has risen to his feet, he should not think to adjust his doublet or to rearrange his disordered locks, or to brush the dust from off his knees. Such actions constitute a return to petty realities completely destructive

of dramatic illusion. Actresses who smooth out their dresses or their tresses in moments of mental or bodily anguish or during rapturous expression, likewise lose their grip on the emotion of the audience. A fop may, after taking off his hat, arrange his curls. A heartless coquette straightens her ribbons while her lover's heart is breaking.

To advance toward the footlights beyond the line of the curtain, is to step out of the picture. The actor breaking this rule ceases to be Canio or Carmen, and becomes simple Signor Campobello or simple Miss Bellefield (doubly simple, in fact).

In many theatres it is still necessary to simulate the drinking of imaginary wine out of papier-maché goblets. However, you can and should avoid brandishing violently a cup whose contents you are supposed to drink subsequently. Look out for this in drinking-songs.

Is a ballet being danced or a pantomime played before you—you, who impersonate a king, a duchess, or a spectator of any ilk? Be an attentive and interested observer, and don't spoil the picture by chatting with your neighbor or by letting your eye rove over the audience.

An "aside" should not be sung directly to the public as though you were taking it personally into your confidence. Although the audience must see and hear what is being done and sung, nevertheless it is not supposed to exist—as far as the dramatic reality of the work under performance is concerned. The "aside" is generally spoken to one's self. Therefore, in singing an

"aside," turn your face away from the actors (or actor) who are supposed not to be conscious of this revelation of your secret thought, and let your facial expression complete the significance of your "aside." No gesture should accompany the "aside" or, at most, only a circumscribed gesture hidden from the other actor or actors by your body.

When down-stage, facing audience, your turning, preparatory to going up-stage, will be rendered easier and more graceful by taking one or two steps further down-stage and then pivoting on the balls of the two feet just when, after taking the last step, your weight has passed over the heel of the down-stage foot. (See Chapter I: "How to Walk: Pivoting.") The down-stage foot will be the *left* foot if you are to the *left* of the prompter's box. The down-stage foot will be the *right* foot if you are to the *right* of the prompter's box. In both cases, you wheel *toward the prompter*, i. e., toward the centre of the stage, your face remaining in view of the audience.

The Art of Make-Up is not touched upon in this book, and the author will allow himself but one remark thereupon. As you avoid monotony in the acting and singing of your different operatic parts, so you must shun lack of variety in your make-up. Even women ought to strive after a distinctive face-and-hair appearance in each rôle; while men, with the resources of beard, moustache, wig, and make-up tricks at their disposal, are inexcusable if they do not work out a different "head" for each personage they portray.

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(Treatises on "make-up" may be obtained from publishing houses that specialize in plays.)

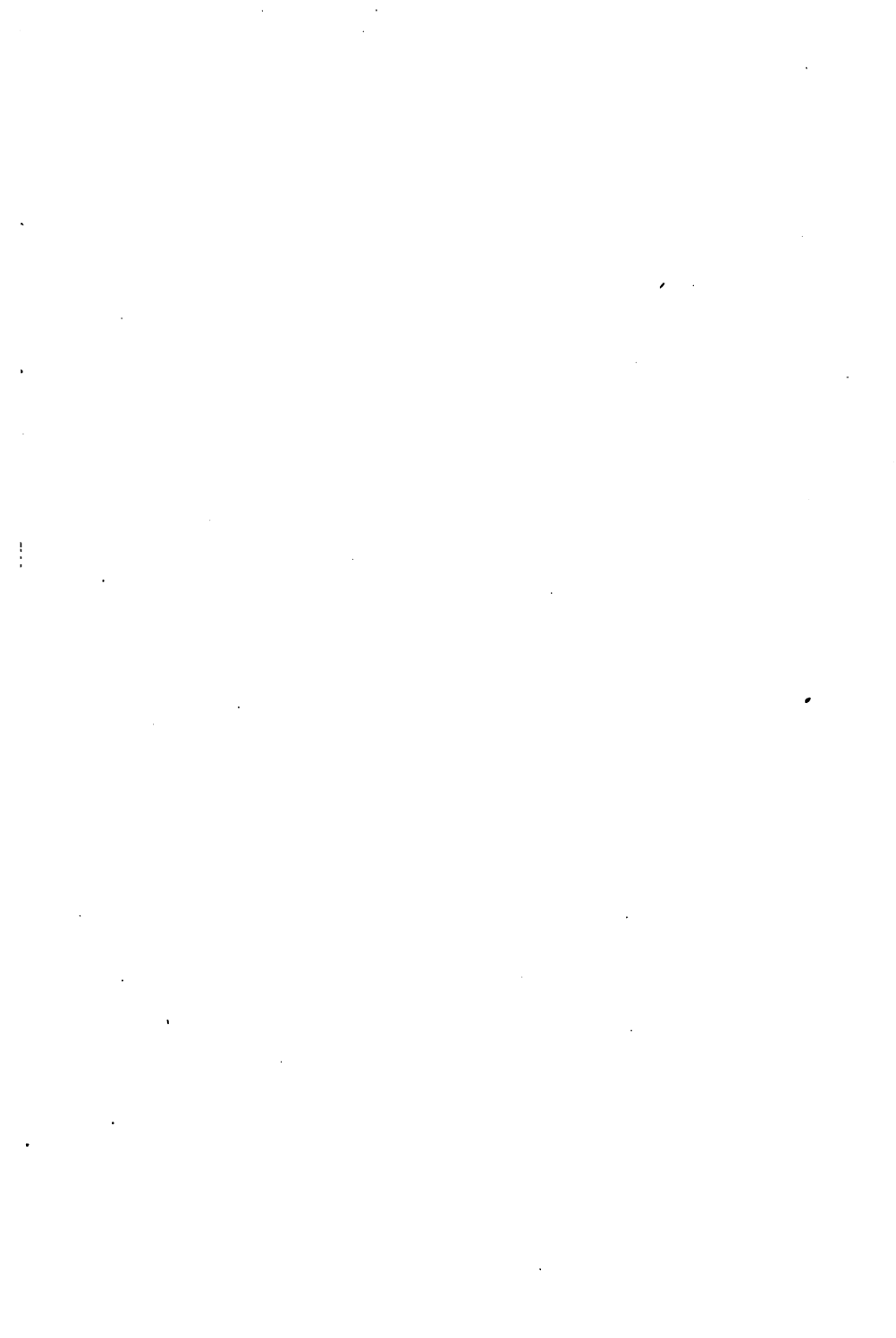
Examine in detail the paintings and sculptures of good artists. Note their grouping of the personages and the varying attitudes. There is much to be learned in this way. These painters and sculptors not only possess the artistic vision, but they have given an immense amount of thought to the creation of the beings who people their canvases and live in the marble and bronze. Moreover, remark the fact that although the painted figure's attitude never changes, you do not tire of looking at it, because it is true to nature and withal artistic. Therefore, don't be in a hurry to abandon a good attitude; maintain it as long as you can logically, and, wherever possible, merge *deliberately* one attitude or gesture into its logical successor.

Even if you do not have a vital part in the passing action and are only a listener, be an intelligent listener while you are "on." Do not for an instant relax your attention to what is being enacted on the stage. It is your duty to the public, to the authors, to your fellow actors, and to yourself; and it is also your pleasure—if you love your art and understand the importance of giving bountifully of it to the public.

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And when, at last, you move at ease within the limits of these rules, you may (and will) break—artistically—many of them and the applause of men shall be yours.

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Richmond, CA 94804-4698

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ALL BOOKS MAY BE RECALLED AFTER 7 DAYS  
2-month loans may be renewed by calling  
(415) 642-6233

1-year loans may be recharged by bringing books  
to NRLF

Renewals and recharges may be made 4 days  
prior to due date

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DUE AS STAMPED BELOW

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**APR 29 1989**

MAY 10 1988 REC'D

SEP 16 1999

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**JUL 20 2000**

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